

HIGHROADS OF HISTORY

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Edward the Third's Encounter with Godemar du Fay at the river Somme.
(A study from a painting by Sir John Gilbert, R.A.)

THE ROYAL SCHOOL SERIES

Highroads of History

Book X.

Highroads of European
History

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS book of biographical stories is intended for use in schools where it is desired to introduce older pupils to European history, with the twofold object of widening the historical outlook and endeavouring to render more intelligible the history of our own country. It will serve to fix a few great names and a few outstanding events. More than this cannot be attempted at this early stage.



READY !

*(From the painting by S. P. Cockerell. By permission of
Messrs. Graves and Co., Ltd. See p. 95.)*

HIGHROADS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY.

I.

THE LAST ROMAN TRIUMPH.

ON a certain day in the fourth year of the fifth century the streets of Rome were thronged with people who had gathered to rejoice over a great victory of the imperial army. Not long before great hordes of wild fighting men of the race of the Goths, led by a chief named Alaric, had poured down through the Alpine passes upon the plain of Northern Italy, and had with great difficulty been checked, defeated, and driven back into the wild lands beyond the Alpine barrier.

A terrible danger had been averted, and the people of Italy now gave themselves up to feasting and rejoicing. Banquets and games were held in all the great cities, while in Rome the young Emperor Honorius announced that he meant, on the invitation of the Senate, to pass with the victorious general, Stilicho, and his troops through the streets of the capital in celebration of the victory over Alaric. The procession or "triumph" was to be followed by a series of games in the Coliseum,

where the most famous athletes of Rome would give exhibitions of their skill and endurance.

In the olden days the route taken would have ended at the Temple of Jupiter, where offerings would have been made to the heathen gods, while the captives taken in battle would have been slaughtered before the eyes of the people. But now Rome was Christian, at least in name, and the emperor was to visit several of the churches; while the lives of the captives were to be spared, in obedience to the teaching of the Prince of Peace.

In the early morning the white-robed members of the Senate set out on their way to meet the victorious army at the Gate of Triumph. Arrived there, they were greeted with loud shouts by the soldiers, and turning about, led the procession through the streets of the city. After them marched the musicians, playing upon horns and trumpets. Then followed a file of carriages laden with the spoils taken from the enemy—armour, weapons, and rich treasures of gold and silver, as well as many beautiful works of art which the wild warriors of Alaric had brought from some of the most famous cities of Greece.

Next came the captives taken during the war, in order of their rank; and many of the spectators on that day marked with uneasiness the wild and savage glances thrown among them by these barbarians who had dared to measure their strength against the might of Rome. "Woe to the conquered!" was the cry upon all hands; but there were many in the crowds which lined the streets

who thought with secret dread and misgiving of the fate which would have overtaken the imperial city if the Roman legions had not been victorious in the northern war.

The prisoners of war were followed by a strong bodyguard of Roman soldiers which preceded the car of the emperor, a circular chariot drawn by four horses. On his brow the boy Honorius wore the laurel wreath of victory, while behind him stood a servant who held above his head a massive crown of gold studded with jewels. After him came Stilicho and the other leaders in the war, to whose bravery and faithfulness the victory was really due, though custom decreed that no subject, however famous, should pass in triumph through the gates of the imperial city. His success was that of his master, Cæsar Augustus, the lord of the world.

Loud shouts of triumph greeted the car of the emperor; but the cries of welcome were mingled with the exclamations of many who jeered at the master of Rome and made rude remarks upon his personal appearance. Strange as it may appear, this was according to settled custom, for the people were allowed this liberty lest the victor should become too proud, and so bring down upon himself the vengeance of heaven. The best and bravest of the Roman victors had heard these cries of mockery at the crowning moment of their lives.

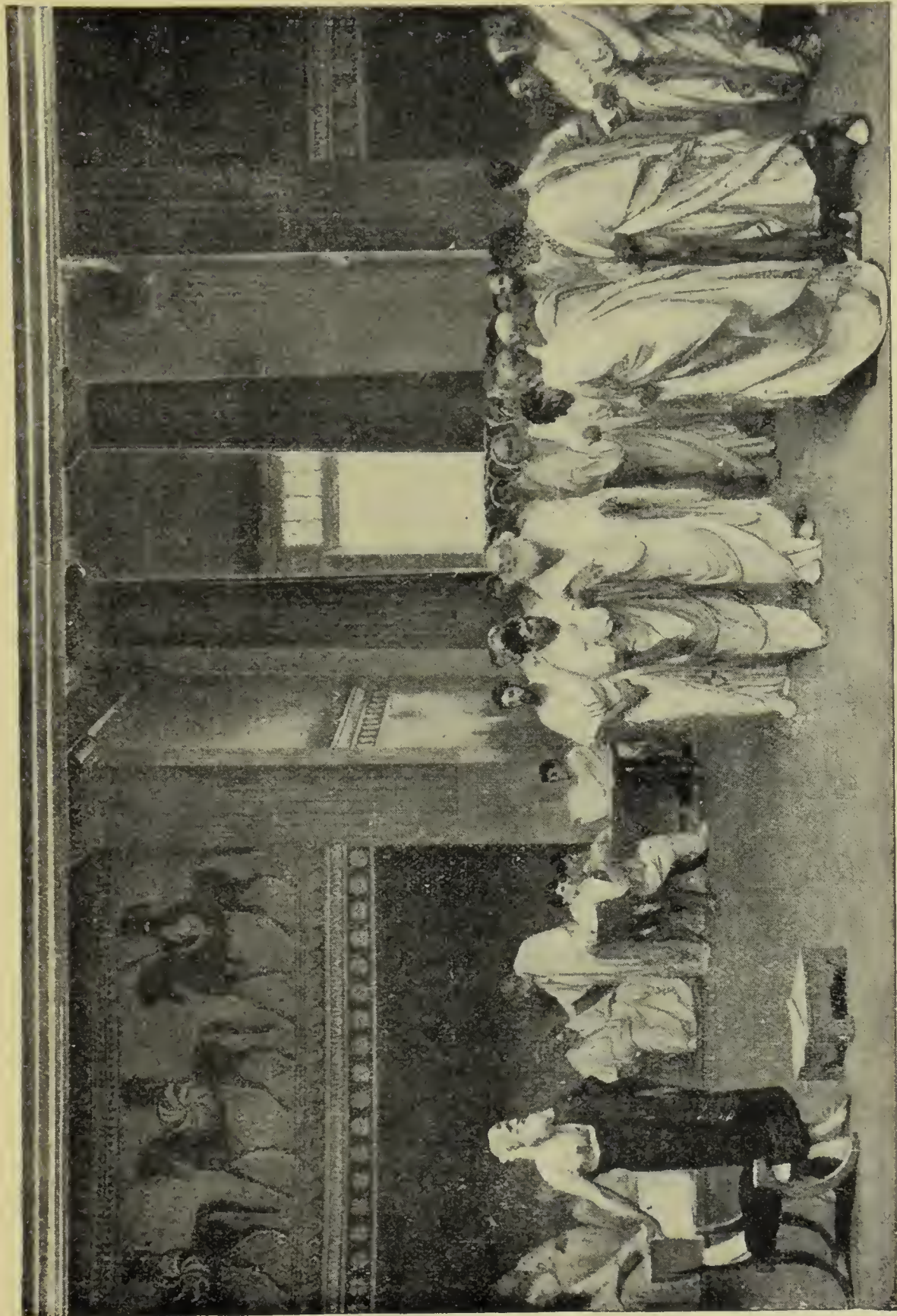
The procession was closed by a long line of Roman soldiers carrying branches of laurel in their hands, as tokens of peace and victory, and

wearing wreaths of the same evergreen round their heads.

As they marched they sang songs in honour of the emperor, mingled with rough jokes at his expense. So, with shouts and laughter, victors and vanquished swept onward, pausing at three of the churches in turn, in order that thanks might be offered to God for His help and deliverance.

After the ceremony, the people made their way to the Coliseum to watch the games of various kinds. Soon the huge amphitheatre was crowded with spectators eagerly awaiting the appearance of the competitors in the arena. In a gilded box sat the youthful Cæsar, wearing a diamond collar and a golden wreath. Around him were grouped the ladies of his court, gorgeously dressed, with the chief senators and officers of the army. On the highest seats were the Roman citizens, who talked loudly, cracked jokes with one another, sang popular songs, and stamped impatiently for the games to begin.

Before long they were eagerly watching the runners in the foot-races as they strained every nerve to reach the goal, cheering them onward with loud, hoarse cries of encouragement. Then followed races on horseback and in chariots, and later a grand hunting of beasts, which were turned loose in the arena. A sword-dance next claimed the attention of the spectators, and then came a long pause. The people grew impatient, and began to stamp their feet. Still there was no sign from the master of the games.



THE ROMAN SENATE, SHOWING THE BLIND SENATOR, APPIUS CLAUDIUS CÆCUS,
BEING LED INTO THE SENATE HOUSE.

(From the painting by Maccari. Anderson, photo.)

At last the stamping grew louder. Then an officer on horseback gave a signal with a handkerchief, which was answered with loud and continued cries of "Aaa-aaa!" from thousands of throats. At once a great company of gladiators appeared, wearing helmets without eye-openings, and began to shake their swords in the air. Soon they parted into smaller companies, and urged on by men with long two-pronged forks they began to fight.

The innocent, harmless games were over. The bloodthirstiness of the Roman rabble was aroused, and there was to be once more a return to the fierce gladiatorial combats of the earlier days. Before long a number of pairs of fighters closed in, and the first blood began to flow. Then the combatants cast aside their shields, and extending their left hands to one another, so as not to be separated, they fought to the death. When a man fell to the ground, he raised his fingers to the audience as a sign that he begged for life. But, at the beginning of the games at least, such a petition as this was unheeded; and when the uppermost fighter noted the down-turned thumbs of the emperor and those about him, the death-blow was mercilessly given.

The numbers of the fighters grew less and less until only two remained. The men with the forks pushed them towards each other. They closed, and stabbed at one another until both fell dead. Then, amidst cries of "It is finished," numbers of slaves entered the arena to drag away the bodies, while boys raked the bloodstained sand and spread it over with crocus leaves.

In a few moments the arena was again thronged with fresh bands of fighters, and soon these also were engaged in deadly combat. Suddenly a strange cry was heard, and for a moment the fighting ceased. The spectators turned as one man to gaze upon a figure standing with uplifted hand upon one of the lowest seats in the great circus—the figure of a Christian monk named Telemachus, who could no longer bear the sight of the cruel slaughter.

“Stay!” he cried. “In the name of Christ, desist! Repay not the mercy of God with this cruel slaughter.” Then with a wild bound he leapt into the arena and ran between the lines of combatants. Angry shouts arose from the spectators, furious at this interruption of their sport; while a shower of missiles—empty bottles, clean-picked bones, seats, stones—fell upon the daring intruder, and in a few moments he sank dead upon the bloodstained sand.

At once the mood of the people changed, and even Cæsar himself was moved. Cries of pity and distress arose on all hands. Crowds of people left the theatre. The games were broken up. By his death the Christian martyr had won a complete victory. Never again did the walls of the Coliseum re-echo the shouts of the victors and the groans of the dying. As the triumphal procession of Honorius proved to be the last to pass through the streets of Rome, so this fight in the Coliseum closed the long record of cruel slaughter within its walls.

Ancient Rome may truly be said to have passed away with that arresting cry of the Christian monk

Telemachus. Five years after that scene in the Coliseum the barbarian chieftain Alaric took the city, which became the spoil of the fierce tribes from beyond the Danube. Yet, stern conqueror as he was, Alaric spared the Christian churches in the general destruction of the beautiful buildings of imperial Rome. We shall see as we go on with our story how in time the city became the centre of the religion of the brave monk Telemachus—the religion of Christ, who was destined to rule in peace the world that had once been swayed by the sword of the Cæsars of Rome.



II.

PEPIN THE SHORT, KING OF THE WESTERN FRANKS.

WHEN the Goths under Alaric entered Rome, they did more than take possession of a great and wealthy city. They broke up a world-wide empire.

It is true that for a long time the Roman emperor had been losing his hold upon the lands round the Mediterranean which had for centuries owned him as their sole master and lord. But now the work of destruction was almost complete. Before many years had gone by the word of Cæsar was null and void, and the peoples of Western Europe looked in vain for a master.

They found one in time, as we shall see ; but before a great ruler arose to take the lead once more there was a long period of confusion, which some writers have named the Dark Ages. During this time most men did whatever seemed right in their own eyes. There was constant and savage warfare in almost all parts of Western and Central Europe ; and the only light which illumined the darkness was that of the Christian faith. For through all the anarchy and disorder of the time the Bishop or Pope of Rome, whatever else he did, kept before the minds of men thoughts of higher things than fighting and plunder. He

also became, as we shall see, a powerful prince, to whom the fiercest warrior chiefs were glad to submit their rival claims.

Alaric was, as we have said, a chieftain of the race known as the Goths, and the cousins of the Goths were the Angles and Saxons of whom we read in our own history. Other tribes closely related to them were the Lombards and the Franks. All these people were of German race, and they came originally from the lands round about the Baltic. They had proved a thorn in the pillow of the Roman Cæsar long before Alaric had marched into Rome, and seeing the number of people there had exclaimed, "The thicker the grass, the more easily mown." Our business now is to learn how these Franks gradually became the ruling race in the lands of Western Europe.

Let us fix our attention upon a certain chieftain named Clovis, who was the head or king of a Frankish tribe in that part of Europe which we now call Belgium. Being of an ambitious nature, he made haste to extend his dominions. He marched westward and drove the Romans out of the north of the land which we now know as France, but which was then known as Gaul ; and he set up his court at a small town on the Seine. This place was first known as Lutetia, but later as Paris.

Clovis was a heathen, and plundered many churches. One day his men carried off among their booty a vase of priceless value. The bishop sent to beg for its restoration. "Nay," said the



St. Geneviève at Prayer.

*(From a study by Gilbert James, after the painting
by Puvis de Chavannes, in the Pantheon, Paris.)*

king, "the vase belongs not to *me* but to *us*. We shall, however, cast lots for it, and if it falls to me the bishop shall have it."

Lots were about to be cast when the king cried, "Warriors, let me have the vase in addition to my rightful share," for he wished to ensure its return to the bishop. "We will," cried the chieftains, all except one man, who, raising his battle-axe, shattered the vase at a blow. "We must share alike," he said sternly ; and the king had nothing to say, for the man had right and tribal custom upon his side. The casting of lots, however, gave the fragments of the vase to Clovis, and they were at once sent to the bishop.

Clothilde, the wife of Clovis, was a Christian, and ardently longed to see her warlike husband also become a follower of her Divine Master. Her entreaties, however, were of no avail until the king one day found himself hard pressed in battle. Then he uttered his first Christian prayer : "Jesus Christ, whom Clothilde declares to be the Son of the living God, if Thou wilt give me victory over mine enemies I will believe in Thee and be baptized." At that moment the enemy turned and fled. Clovis kept his word, and, to the great joy of his wife, was baptized with more than three thousand of his soldiers.

It is touching to read in the old books of the conversion of this hardy Frankish warrior. The priests told him the wonderful story of the Gospel, and dwelt, of course, upon the crucifixion of Christ on the Mount of Calvary as the central fact of

their religious teaching. The generous heart of the rough warrior was touched when he heard for the first time the piteous tale of the death of Christ upon the Cross. "Ah," he cried, grasping his great battle-axe, as if eager to take the field at once, "would that I had been there with my Franks!"

On a later occasion, we are told, Clovis wished to cross a river which was swollen with the autumn rains. Unable to find a ford, he knelt down and asked for God's direction. "The following day," runs the pretty story, "under the guidance of God, a doe of wondrous size entered the river in plain sight of the army and crossed a ford, thus pointing out the way for the soldiers to get over." In this same campaign, we read in a very old book, the king fought at night under the light of a miraculous ball of fire which illumined the path of his own army, while it dazzled the eyes of his foes.

When the roving Franks entered the valley of the Seine they had to contend with the Gauls of that district, who did not at once bow to the invaders. A number of these people were besieged in Lutetia, and when matters were going hard with them they were greatly helped and encouraged by a young Christian shepherdess named Geneviève.

Finding that none of the warriors within the city dared run the risk of going beyond the walls to obtain food for the starving women and children, this brave girl set out alone in a little boat, and

guiding it down the stream, landed at a place below the Frankish camp. She was then able to make her way to other cities of Gaul, where she begged for help for the starving people of Lutetia.

A number of boats filled with provisions were at once sent down the river, and after some difficulty were able to reach the town. Geneviève was now regarded by the Franks as a kind of goddess, and when they took the place orders were given that she was not to be admitted within the gates, so great was their fear of what they thought to be her magic power.

The girl, however, was able to elude the vigilance of the guards, and made her way to one of the old banqueting halls of the Romans, where the Franks were holding a wild carousal. What she said to the revellers we do not know. We only know that the leader of the Franks, in great awe of her gentleness, fearlessness, and simplicity, granted her the lives of certain citizens whom he had already determined to put to death, and promised to treat the rest of the inhabitants with kindness.

Geneviève lived until the time of Clovis, and had the joy of seeing him become a Christian. She saw the foundation of several noble Christian churches, including that of Notre Dame in Paris, and lived to a great age, dying only three months after King Clovis himself.

Strong man and powerful ruler as he was, Clovis was not destined to be the founder of a vigorous royal race. His sons and grandsons were as weak

and helpless as he had been strong and capable, and the chief power passed into the hands of a man named Pepin, who held the office of Mayor of the Palace. This official banished the king of his time to a small farm, where the monarch lived for the best part of the year, and whence he was brought to the royal city in a cart drawn by oxen when business of great importance had to be settled.

The son of Pepin, a soldier named Charles Martel—that is, the Hammer—succeeded to his father's power. We shall read more of this warrior in a later chapter, and see how he earned his surname. His son, Pepin the Short, became the Mayor of the Palace in his turn, and at once made up his mind to become king in fact, as he was already king in name.

He sent a messenger to the Pope of Rome with a letter, which ran as follows :—

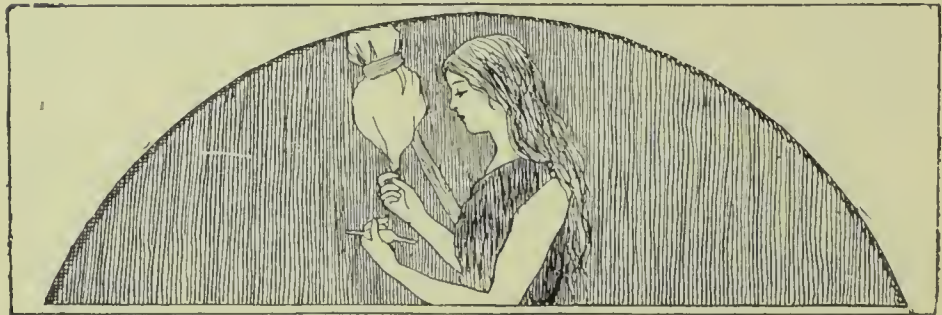
“Does the kingdom belong to him who exercises the power without the name, or to him who bears the name without the power?”

The Pope was at the time engaged in a war with the Lombards of Northern Italy, and hoping to gain the help of Pepin sent him the answer he required.

So Pepin summoned his chieftains, who lifted him upon the shield, according to ancient custom, and hailed him as “King of the Franks, by the Grace of God.” Then the new monarch was anointed and crowned by Archbishop Boniface, in

whom we ought to have a special interest, for he was a native of Devonshire, who had left his home to carry the glad news of the Gospel into various parts of the wide lands ruled by the Frankish king. The dethroned descendant of Clovis, according to the old chronicler, was then "shaved and sent to a monastery."

So the strong man prevailed, and the Mayor of the Palace became King of the Franks and founder of a royal line of glorious names, headed by that of his son Charles the Great, or Charlemagne, of whose great deeds we shall read in our next chapter.



III.

CHARLEMAGNE, THE MAN OF IRON.

ONE day Desiderio, a king of the Lombard race which had settled in Northern Italy, stood on a tall watch-tower of his palace looking northward towards the snowy-crested Alps. As he looked he saw approaching a mighty army, which soon thronged the roads leading into the royal city.

“Is Charlemagne among that terrible host?” asked the king of Olger the Dane, a famous fighter, who stood near him; and the man answered shortly, “No.”

After the great army of footmen and horsemen had passed by a band of gallant knights in full armour came into view, whose appearance struck terror to the heart of the king. “Surely,” he said, “one of these is the mighty Charlemagne.” “He comes not yet,” said Olger; “but when he does appear you will undoubtedly know him.”

As the warrior spoke a thick cloud of dust was seen on the highway in the distance, and after a few moments Charlemagne appeared—a Man of Iron.

“His helmet was of iron, and his gloves
Of iron, and his breastplate and his greaves
And tassets were of iron, and his shield.
In his left hand he held an iron spear,
In his right hand his sword invincible.
The horse he rode on had the strength of iron,
And colour of iron. All who went before him,
Beside him, and behind him, his whole host,

Were armed with iron, and their hearts within them
 Were stronger than the armour that they wore.
 The fields and all the roads were filled with iron,
 And points of iron glistened in the sun,
 And shed a terror through the city streets.

This at a single glance Olger the Dane
 Saw from the tower, and, turning to the king,
 Exclaimed in haste: 'Behold! this is the man
 You looked for with such eagerness!' and then
 Fell as one dead at Desiderio's feet."

Such was the impression created in the minds of men by the powerful ruler who lived about half a century before the time of our King Alfred, and who is pictured by one great writer as "sweeping over Europe, surrounded by countless legions of soldiers, who formed a very sea of bristling steel." He was undoubtedly one of the greatest of the world's great rulers, a man who knew both what he wanted and how to accomplish his desires.

His first great object was to unite all the German tribes together into one Christian empire. This was no easy task, for when he became king he was acknowledged as ruler of only a very small territory. But after thirty years of fighting he had made himself master of almost the whole of Western Europe.

The most arduous of his campaigns was that against the Saxons, the kinsmen of our own ancestors, who were the more difficult to conquer because they had no towns or roads, and so could retire, at very short notice, into a forest or swamp which was almost inaccessible to the invaders of their land.

It took Charlemagne many long years to accom-



THE POPE CROWNS CHARLEMAGNE AS EMPEROR.

(From the picture by Levy in the Pantheon.)

plish the task of conquest, years which were stained by the memory of numerous deeds of cruelty. In these days, too, it is perhaps a shock to us to find that, when they were conquered, these people were forced to become Christians exactly as they were forced to swear allegiance to their new ruler. The answers to the stern catechism were demanded at the point of the sword :—

Q. Forsakest thou Satan ?

A. I forsake Satan.

Q. And all Satan's service ?

A. And I forsake all Satan's service.

Q. And all Satan's works ?

A. And I forsake all Satan's works and words, Thor and Woden, and all the evil spirits that are his companions.

Once under the rule of Charlemagne, however, Western Europe gradually became civilized. Monasteries were founded in various parts, and round each of these the husbandmen and others employed by the monks collected, until gradually the walls of a city arose where once was lonely swamp or impenetrable forest. And in due time the sacred buildings of the Church became the centre of law and order. "If any one shall have fled to a church for refuge," runs the king's command, "let no one presume to expel him by violence, but he shall be left in peace until he shall be brought to the judicial assemblage. Moreover, let him plead his cause as best he can, and he shall be judged."

Charlemagne also checked the advance of the fierce and warlike Huns, who swept over Europe from Central Asia. He not only conquered them, but so impressed their leader with his powers as a general that the latter declared himself willing to be baptized into the faith of a king and leader who could fight so well.

One of the most famous campaigns of Charlemagne was that against the Moors of Northern Africa, who had set up a kingdom in the south of Spain, and who were continually harassing the lands of the Christian princes in the north of that country. It was during this war that he lost his nephew, young Roland, who afterwards became a favourite hero of romance.

At the famous pass of Roncesvalles, say the old stories, this brave knight, betrayed by a jealous friend, found himself and his little band surrounded by the foemen. Bravely though he fought with his golden-hilted sword Durendal, the gift of the fairies, he was at last overwhelmed, and sank to the ground. But with his last breath he raised his horn, and blew a mighty blast that was heard by Charlemagne, thirty leagues away! With a shout of "'Tis Roland's horn!" the great leader turned and galloped back to the pass. But before he reached the fatal spot Roland had passed away, with his last breath commending his king and country to the God of battles.

The last and most successful war undertaken by Charlemagne was that against the Lombards, of whom we read at the beginning of this chapter.

By this conquest the ruler of the Franks became the king of Italy as far south as Rome, with the exception of Venice, and was crowned with the iron crown of Lombardy, which was said to have been made from one of the great nails by which Christ was fastened to the Cross of Calvary. This campaign in Northern Italy had been undertaken at the request of the Pope, for Rome had been hard pressed by the Lombards ; and when Charlemagne had thus shown his strength, it was naturally to him that Pope Leo turned again when a certain party within the city of Rome, jealous of his power, drove him from the papacy. Charlemagne restored him, and thus the friendship between Pope and king was made stronger than ever.

Charlemagne was now undisputed master of the whole of Western Europe. He reigned over territories almost as wide as those of the Cæsars of Rome, whose successors now ruled at Constantinople over what is often spoken of in history as the Eastern Empire. Why should he not become the real successor of the "lords of the world" ?

In the year 800 he happened to be in Rome, and seems to have come to some agreement with the Pope on this important matter. At all events, when attending high mass on Christmas Day, he was, to the surprise of all, crowned by the Pope himself as "Emperor of the Romans," and hailed by the crowd as "the most pious AUGUSTUS, crowned of God." Thus he became the real successor of the Cæsars, the Roman emperor and

lord of the world. But, unlike Cæsar, he had a partner in his sovereignty. He had been crowned by the Pope, who henceforth claimed spiritual authority over the Empire. This claim afterwards led to disputes between succeeding popes and emperors, as we shall see in later chapters.

A writer of the time of Charlemagne has left us a very full account of the life and deeds of the great king. "Charles was large and strong," he tells us, "and of lofty stature. His eyes were very large and animated, hair auburn, and face laughing and merry. His gait was firm, his carriage manly, and his voice very clear.

"In accordance with the national custom, he took frequent exercise on horseback or in the chase. He enjoyed the vapours from natural warm springs, and hence it was that he built his palace at Aix-la-Chapelle, and lived there constantly during his later years.

"While at table he listened to reading or music. The subjects of the readings were the stories and deeds of olden time. He was fond, too, of St. Augustine's books, and especially of the one entitled 'The City of God.'

"The king spent much time and labour studying rhetoric and astronomy. He learned to make calculations, and he also tried to write, keeping tablets in bed under his pillow, that at leisure hours he might accustom his hand to form the letters; however, as he began his efforts late in life, they met with little success."

The great emperor died in the year 814, and

32 CHARLEMAGNE, THE MAN OF IRON.

was buried within the church which he had built at Aix-la-Chapelle, the capital of his dominions north of the Alps. And there, it is said, he was found, two centuries later, by one who entered the tomb, "sitting, as in life, on a marble throne, dressed in his imperial robes, with his horn, his sword, and the book of the Gospels on his knee."

To this day he lives in the hearts of the German race, who say that he still watches over his people, crossing the Rhine in the autumn season on a bridge of gold, and blessing the vineyards and cornfields of the land.



IV.

MOHAMMED, THE PROPHET OF ALLAH.

“THERE is no God but He, the Ever-Living, the Ever-Subsisting. Slumber seizeth Him not nor sleep. To Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. His throne comprehendeth the heavens and the earth, and the care of them burdeneth Him not. And he is the High, the Great.

Say, He is God one God ;
God, the Eternal.
He begetteth not nor is begotten,
And there is none equal unto Him.”

Such are some of the opening words of the Koran, or Mohammedan Bible, which was given to the Arabian race by the great prophet Mohammed, of whom we are now to read.

You will remember the touching story of Hagar and Ishmael, which is related in the Book of Genesis. There we read how the bondwoman was cast out by Abraham, the sheikh or chieftain, and how, when the “water was spent in the bottle” in the wilderness of Beersheba, God heard the voice of the boy, and, having directed his mother to a well, foretold the future of the cast-out son of

Abraham. "Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation."

The "nation" which afterwards claimed descent from the son of Hagar was that of the Saracens of Arabia. They did not, however, worship the God who had saved their ancestor in the wilderness of Beersheba, but, as we read in the Koran, their gods were the sun, moon, and stars until the prophet arose, whose life was spent in directing their attention to a God who, unlike the heavenly bodies, "does not set."

"When the night overshadowed Abraham he saw a star, and he said, '*This* is my Lord.' But when it set he said, 'I like not gods which set.'

"And when he saw the moon rising he said, 'This is my Lord.' But when he saw it set he said, 'Verily, if my Lord direct me not, I shall become one of the people who go astray.'

"And when he saw the sun rising he said, 'This is my Lord; this is the greatest.' But when it set he said, 'O my people, verily I am clear of that which ye associate with God. I direct my face only unto Him who hath created the heavens and the earth.'"

It was to bring this great truth home to the minds of the people of Arabia that Mohammed began his ministry. He was born in the year 570, during the time of the Anglo-Saxon settlements in our own land, and was quite unknown until he became the husband of a rich lady whose estates he had managed for some time. Having amassed great wealth as a merchant, he began, at about the

age of forty, to preach a new religion, in spite of the fact that his nearest relatives were among the keepers of the Sacred Stone of Mecca, a black aerolite which was worshipped by the Arab race as the gift of an angel to Father Abraham himself.

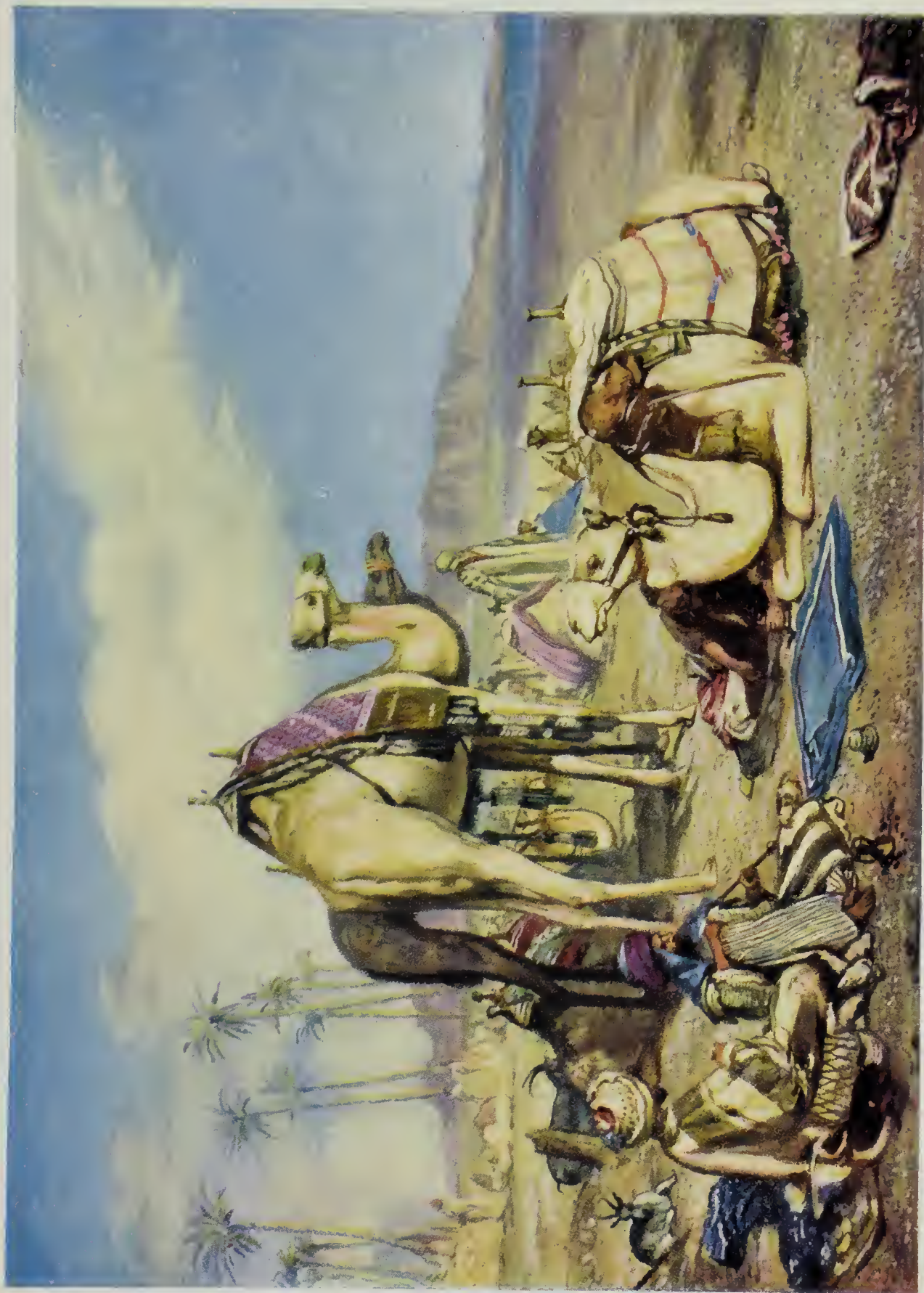
Mohammed knew only too well how evil were the lives of the idolaters, and he said that he had been visited by the archangel Gabriel, who gave him God's command to go out and proclaim that "There is no god but God (Allah), and Mohammed is His slave and prophet." The preaching of this doctrine was, of course, actively opposed by the priests of the Sacred Stone, and the prophet was forced to fly from Mecca, where his life was in great danger.

He was at once pursued, and hid himself in a mountain cave. As soon as he entered this place of refuge, the tradition tells, spiders came and wove their webs across the entrance; and when the men who sought the life of the prophet came up to the opening of the cave, they did not think it worth while to pass the entrance, but turned aside with the remark, "The web of the spider has been over the mouth of the cave since the birth year of Mohammed." In time the prophet found his way to Medina, where he made many converts. But after a time he seems to have lost sight of the spiritual message with which he had set out upon his ministry, and he became a warrior and a military leader, prepared to embark upon a career of worldly conquest and to put to the sword all who did not accept his teaching.

His newer method of appeal at once brought the whole of Arabia to his banner, which bore the symbol of the Crescent, and before long his adherents were ready to force their new religion upon the world. Little advance was made, however, during the lifetime of the prophet, but within thirty years of his death his followers, led by the caliphs, who succeeded to the leadership of all true Mohammedans, had conquered Persia, Syria, and Egypt, and had set up a new Eastern Empire, with Baghdad as its centre.

Others pushed westward through North Africa, where they set up the kingdom of the Moors. Thence they had only to cross the narrow Strait of Gibraltar to establish themselves in the south-western part of Europe, and in a short time they were masters of the south of Spain. Their advance was checked at the great battle of Tours, where they were defeated by the brave Frankish leader Charles Martel, of whom we have already read. It was in this great fight that he earned his surname, which means "the Hammer."

In spite of this check, however, the Mohammedan Moors remained for many centuries in the south of Spain, and they taught the people of Western Europe many things which they had not known before. They set up a university at Cordova, which soon became famous, and numbered among its students many followers of the Cross as well as of the Crescent, who came to study philosophy, law, and rhetoric. The basis of our arithmetic and algebra is the work of these



The Halt in the Desert.
(From the painting by J. F. Lewis, in South Kensington Museum.)

Arabian teachers, who had also a wide knowledge of astronomy, science, and music, and developed a beautiful style of architecture distinguished by the horseshoe arch, the dome, and the minaret.

They excelled, too, in the work of their hands. "They outdid the world," writes a historian, "in variety and beauty of design and perfection of workmanship. They worked in all the metals—gold, silver, copper, bronze, iron, and steel. In textile fabrics they have never been surpassed. They made glass and pottery of the finest quality. They knew the secrets of dyeing, and they manufactured paper. They had many processes of dressing leather, and their work was famous throughout Europe.

"They made tinctures, essences, and syrups. They made sugar from the cane, and grew many fine kinds of wine. They practised farming in a scientific way, and had good systems of irrigation. They excelled in horticulture, knowing how to graft and how to produce new varieties of fruit and flowers. They introduced into the West many trees and plants from the East, and wrote scientific treatises on farming."

Meanwhile the Holy City, Jerusalem, had fallen under the rule of the Mohammedans. But they did not interfere with the Christian pilgrims who visited the place. There is, indeed, a story of Charlemagne himself making his way barefoot to Jerusalem as a Christian pilgrim, and of the respect paid to him by the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, who delivered to him the keys of the

Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which had been built over the grave of Jesus Christ by Helena, mother of the Roman emperor Constantine.

During the eleventh century, however, the empire of the Arabian followers of Mohammed, the Saracens, as they are usually called, passed entirely into the hands of the Turks of Central Asia. These people had become Mohammedans, but were quite unable to appreciate the real spirit of civilization and culture which distinguished such followers of the prophet as the Moors of Southern Spain. They were barbarians of the rudest kind, compared with whom the best of the Saracens were cultured gentlemen. We shall read of them again when we come to consider the story of the Crusades.

It was during the time of the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid that the Mohammedan empire, which had its centre at Baghdad, rose to the height of its power. This is the kindly prince who is mentioned in the "Arabian Nights," that storehouse of wonder and adventure dear to every lover of story books.

V.

ROLF THE GANGER, THE UNRULY VASSAL.

ONE day, near the end of his life, the Emperor Charlemagne sat in the window of a castle by the sea. As he looked across the calm water he saw in the distance a black object, which, drawing near, proved to be a ship of the pirates known as the Vikings, who had already made many descents upon the northern shores of the great emperor's dominions. As he watched the black hull drawing nearer and nearer the aged monarch suddenly burst into tears ; for he knew only too well that, when he passed away, the outlying portions of his empire would become the prey of the pirates from the shores of the Baltic, who are known in history as the Northmen or Norsemen.

We have read in our own history of the trouble which these rough warriors brought upon the realm of England, and we know how bravely they were opposed by our King Alfred and his successors. While this fierce struggle was going on in our own country other bands of Norsemen were making descents upon various parts of the coast of Europe from the neighbourhood of Calais right round to the southern shores of Italy.

These Vikings were men of adventurous char-



THE VIKING CHIEF.
(From a study by H. W. Koekkoek.)

acter, eager to win for themselves fairer and more fruitful lands than they already possessed round the shores of the Baltic. In fast sailing vessels, each carrying sixty or seventy men, and under the leadership of rough sea-kings who never "sought refuge under a roof nor emptied their drinking-horns at a fireside," they sailed along the shores and up the navigable rivers, landing now and again to burn and pillage, and then carrying away all the booty upon which they could lay their hands. So swift and determined were they that the terrified people could, as a rule, offer no effective resistance.

They had, as we have said, sorely troubled the coast regions of Charlemagne's dominions for some time before the death of the great emperor. But when he passed away they renewed their assaults with redoubled fury. At his death his kingdom was divided into three portions. The westernmost had its capital at Paris ; the central part had two capitals, Aix-la-Chapelle and Rome, and was ruled by a monarch who took the title of "the Emperor ;" while the third portion was roughly equivalent to the Germany of the present day. Each of these divisions was placed under the rule of a son of Charlemagne.

Of these three great divisions, that which was most accessible to the Norse pirates was the westernmost, which was afterwards to develop into the kingdom of France. The Vikings had made many descents upon the northern shores, and now they sailed up the Seine and invested

Paris, as the Franks had done in the days of Saint Geneviève.

A monk of the time tells the story of the siege of the city, and gives us a vivid picture of the fighting. Here is a portion of his account :—

“The Norsemen came to Paris with seven hundred sailing ships. At one stretch the Seine was lined with vessels for more than two leagues, so that one might ask in astonishment in what cavern the river had been swallowed up, since it was not to be seen.

“The second day of their arrival one of their leaders came to the bishop of the city and said, ‘Have pity on yourself and your flock. Listen to us in order that you may escape death. Give up to us the freedom of the city, and we will respect you and yours.’

“The bishop replied, ‘The king has put Paris in our care. If you yourself had been given the duty of defending these walls, what would you deserve if you gave up the city?’ ‘I should deserve,’ was the ready reply, ‘that my head be cut off and thrown to the dogs. Nevertheless, if you do not yield, our war machines will destroy you with poisoned arrows.’ So saying he went his way.

“In the morning the Northmen, boarding their ships, approached the tower and attacked it. They shook it with their engines and stormed it with arrows. The city resounded with clamour ; the people were aroused ; the bridges trembled. All came together to defend the tower. There perished

many Franks ; after receiving wounds they were lavish of life.

“At last the enemy withdrew.

“The people spent the night repairing the tower with boards. By the next day had been erected a new tower of wood a half higher than the former one. At sunrise the Danes caught their first glimpse of it. Once more they engaged with the Christians in violent combat.

“The tower groaned under the strokes of the darts ; the city shook with the struggle ; the people ran hither and thither ; the bells jangled. The brave Lord Odo ran along the ramparts and hurled back the enemy.

“On those who were undermining the tower he poured oil, wax, and pitch, which, being mixed and heated, burned the Danes and tore off their scalps. ‘May the Seine give you new wigs,’ he cried, ‘and better combed.’

“Count Odo, the chief noble of the place, was sent to the Emperor Charles to ask help for the hard-pressed city. One day he suddenly appeared again in splendour in the midst of three bands of warriors. The sun made his armour glisten so that the Parisians saw their beloved chief at a long distance.

“The enemy, hoping to prevent his entrance, crossed the Seine and took up their position on the bank. Nevertheless, Odo, his horse at a gallop, got past the Northmen and reached the tower, whose gates were opened to him.”

Such a brave resistance was worthy of the suc-

cess which followed. Paris did not fall before the Norsemen, but the Frankish monarch agreed to pay a large sum of money to rid himself for a time of his troublous enemies. They came again, however, and were at last able to force the king to give them the lands round about Rouen, which afterwards formed the Duchy of Normandy.

The first Duke of Normandy was the Norse chieftain, Rolf or Rollo, who won the surname of the Ganger—that is, the Walker—because he was so tall and heavy that no horse could carry him. As Charles's vassal, he “put his hands between the king's hands and became the king's man.”

He performed this ceremony with due decorum, and was then told that he must now kneel and kiss the monarch's foot. “Never,” replied he, “will I bend the knee to any one or kiss his foot.” He was then urged to the formal act of homage by the Franks, and turning to one of his warriors bade him perform the service of submission. The man seized the foot of the king and lifted it to his lips without bending, and so caused the monarch to tumble over backwards, to the unrestrained amusement of all around.

In due time Rollo was baptized, and settling down at Rouen, became a pattern of law and order, and a very capable ruler and duke. He built cities, made just laws, planted farms, rebuilt the churches which his own followers had thrown down, and having subdued the natives of his own duchy, kept a lasting peace within its borders.

VI.

HENRY THE FOWLER AND HENRY THE PENITENT.

THE westernmost portion of Charlemagne's divided empire was troubled by the Norsemen. The easternmost division had to deal with the Huns or Magyars, who came originally from Central Asia, and who for several centuries had made repeated attacks upon the lands of the Franks and their subject races.

These were the barbarians who in the fifth century had so terrified the people of Europe that they named their leader Attila the "Scourge of God." It was the proud boast of this ruthless warrior that the grass never grew again where once the hoof of his horse had trod.

In time the Huns penetrated to Rome itself; but Pope Leo, known as "the Great," went with an embassy to the camp of Attila and pleaded for the city. The sight of the venerable and dignified old man, with his imposing retinue, seems to have overawed the barbarian chief, who was induced without much persuasion to spare the city and to lead his warriors back again through the Alpine passes. Shortly after he crossed the Danube he died suddenly, and was buried in secret.

At last the barbarians set up a Hungarian king-



POPE LEO CHECKS THE ADVANCE OF ATTILA.
(From the mural painting by Raphael in the Vatican. Photo by Mansell.)

dom to the north of the Danube, and thence prepared to make further assaults upon the states of Western Europe. They were a rough, uncivilized race, small of stature, with yellow faces and black hair, and very strong and hardy. The first object of their attack was that part of the Frankish dominions which lay nearest to their own, and which we shall now call Germany.

They organized bands of plunderers, and marched westward and northward. Their methods of attack were similar to those of the Norsemen. They sacked the monasteries, which were the storehouses of most of the wealth of the country; they burnt the towns and villages; and they put the people to the sword without mercy. For a long time the land was sorely in need of a leader who could cope with the danger, and in due time the man appeared. It is interesting to note how his methods of dealing with the Huns resembled those of our King Alfred in his treatment of the Danes.

When King Conrad of Germany lay dying he was asked by his nobles to nominate a successor. Then the king said, "As soon as I have passed away take the royal crown, the lance, and the sword, and offer them to Duke Henry of Saxony; for of all men, he, though mine enemy at the moment, will defend this realm from the Huns, who threaten the land."

The nobles claimed the right to "elect" their king without interference, but they followed the advice of their dying monarch, and sent messengers

from among their number to offer the crown to Duke Henry. He was not at home when they reached his castle in the Harz district, so they set out to seek him, and found him at last far away in the forest engaged in his favourite sport of hawking. The messengers at once made him the formal offer with which they had been entrusted, and which was at once accepted. Not long afterwards Henry was duly elected in a council or "diet" of the German nobility.

The Huns were pressing upon his southern border, and the land was in a state of terror and disorder. The leader was now ready, but the people were not fit to be led. So the king determined to gain time, even at the cost of loss of dignity. He paid the Huns a large tribute on condition that they remained within their own borders for the space of nine years, and during this time of truce he laid his plans for the future.

He raised and trained a national army. He built strongly fortified towns on the frontiers which were likely to be attacked by the enemy, and after each harvest a portion of the grain was set apart for the storehouses of these towns, to be used in time of famine or during a state of siege. Then the wary king tested his army by marching against the Slavs, who occupied the lands to the east of the Elbe, which were now added to the German kingdom, and by extending his territories along the Danube until they included the place which afterwards became the imperial city of Vienna.

Then came the end of the period of truce, and

messengers arrived from the Hungarian court to demand further tribute from the German monarch. They received, so runs the story, the carcass of a dog, which was flung in scorn at their feet, and went back to their master full of rage at the insult, and ready enough to wipe it out in blood. In a short time thousands of Hungarian warriors were marching into Germany, prepared to "drink the rivers dry and stamp the towns to dust."

But they met with such resistance as they had never experienced before. The newly-formed army sprang to the royal summons, the strong towns prepared for resistance, and the country was animated by a national spirit which was the direct creation of one of the "men of mark" of European history. After several minor engagements the king met a great army of the Huns at Merseburg, and defeated them so completely that the northern part of his kingdom at least was never again troubled by the invaders. After his death his son Otto inflicted further defeats upon the Huns, and helped greatly in laying the foundations of modern Germany.

This king, who was the son-in-law of the Saxon king Athelstane, also marched into Northern Italy to the aid of a distressed princess, and, like Charlemagne, had himself crowned with the iron crown of Lombardy. Then, like his great predecessor also, he pushed on to Rome, where he was crowned Emperor of the Romans.

This coronation ceremony, however, no longer made him "lord of the world." For the future

the title of "the Emperor" was to be held by the German king who was powerful enough to get himself crowned by the Pope in St. Peter's. The Pope, jealous of his own power, would not perform the coronation except on his own terms, as the following story will show :—

The fifth German king from Otto was Henry the Fourth, in whose time there was a Pope in Rome named Gregory the Seventh, who was decidedly one of the strong men of European history. It was not long before the claims of the German monarch and this Pope came into conflict, and a fierce quarrel began. Gregory ordered the princes of Germany to disown their king. Henry commanded the people of Rome to cast out Gregory from the city. The Pope replied by excommunicating the king, and this step filled Henry with abject fear. He determined to cross the Alps, though it was the depth of winter, and make his submission to the spiritual head of the empire.

How he did so is thus related in a letter from the pen of Pope Gregory himself :—

"When after long postponing a decision we had severely taken the king to task, he came at length of his own accord, with a few followers, showing nothing of hostility or boldness, to the town of Canossa, where we were tarrying.

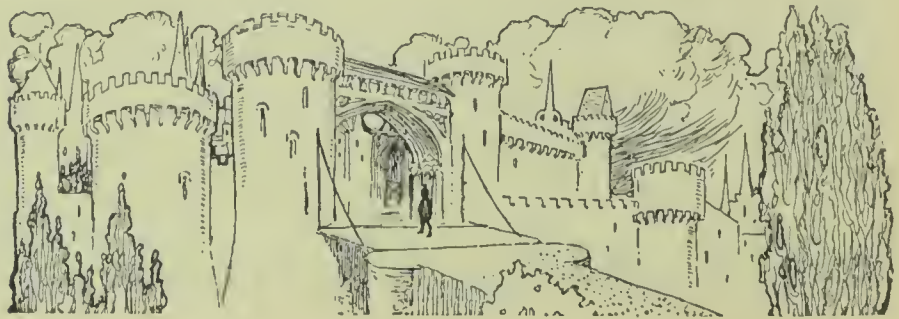
"And there, having laid aside all the belongings of royalty, wretchedly, with bare feet and clad only in a woollen shirt, he continued for three days to stand before the gate of the castle, imploring with

many tears the aid and consolation of our apostolic mercy.

“All who heard of this wondered at the unaccustomed hardness of our heart, while some actually cried out that we were exercising the cruelty of madness. Finally, won by his suit, and by the constant supplications of all who were present, we at length received him into favour.”

In this manner the Pope asserted his position as spiritual head of the empire. But King Henry was eventually able to repay him in the same spirit. Returning home, he was faced by a strong party of his angry nobles, who felt themselves humiliated by the king's abject submission, and before long there was civil war in the land. When this was over Henry marched into Italy, and having declared the Pope deposed, set up a rival Pope, who crowned him emperor in the great church at Rome. So the quarrel went on, until finally King Henry was driven from his throne, and died as a beggar in the street.

This rivalry between emperor and Pope is one of the chief facts of the history of Europe.



VII.

KINGS IN JERUSALEM.

"I CANNOT wear a crown of gold in the place where the Saviour of the world was crowned with thorns." So said the Christian knight Godfrey of Bouillon when he was offered the crown of Jerusalem after the efforts of the first Crusaders had been crowned with success, and the Holy City had been captured from the infidel Turks. And the modest title which he assumed as head of what came to be known as the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem was "Defender and Baron of the Holy Sepulchre." The circumstances which led up to the creation of this little kingdom are among the most stirring in the history of Europe, or indeed of the world.

We have already seen that when the Mohammedan Arabs held Jerusalem they treated Christian pilgrims to the city not only with toleration but with courtesy. But when the Saracens were overthrown by the wild Turks from Central Asia the Christians suffered terrible persecution. The aged Patriarch or Bishop of the Holy City was cast into prison, and kept there until ransomed at enormous cost. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was partially destroyed, and everywhere men, women, and children were called upon to lay down their lives in witness to their faith.

When news of these terrible events reached the towns of Western Europe, the people were roused to almost indescribable fury. One of the returned pilgrims was a man known as Peter the Hermit, who made his way from town to town, telling the people of the cruelties which he had seen inflicted upon the Christians in Jerusalem, and who passionately urged them to forsake all, and in the name of their Master march eastward to drive the "Moslem dogs" from the Holy City. The people were greatly moved by his fiery eloquence, and in the year 1095 Pope Urban the Second summoned a council at Clermont to consider the matter.

The Pope was a man of great eloquence, and he delighted his audience by speaking to the assembly in his native French instead of in the Latin of the Church.

"Oh, race of Franks, chosen by God," he cried, "from the confines of Jerusalem a grievous report has been borne repeatedly to our ears that a race accursed of God has violently invaded the lands of those Christians, and has depopulated them by pillage and fire. They have led away a part of the captives into their own country, and a part they have killed by cruel tortures.

"On whom, therefore, rests the labour of avenging these wrongs if not upon you? Let the deeds of your ancestors encourage you—the glory and greatness of King Charlemagne and your other monarchs who have extended the sway of Holy Church over lands at one time heathen and outcast.

“If you are hindered by love of children, parents, or wife, remember what the Lord says in the Gospel : ‘He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.’

“Let hatred depart from among you. Let your quarrels cease. Enter upon the road of the Holy Sepulchre ; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves. Jerusalem is the centre of the earth. The land is fruitful above all others. This spot the Redeemer of mankind has made illustrious by His advent, has beautified by His sojourn, has consecrated by His passion, has redeemed by His death, has glorified by His burial.

“This royal city seeks and desires to be liberated. From you she asks help because God has conferred upon you, above other nations, great glory in arms. Undertake this journey with eagerness for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the reward of imperishable glory in the kingdom of Heaven.”

A monk who was present tells in simple words of the wonderful effect of the Pontiff’s eloquent appeal. “When Pope Urban had skilfully said these things,” he writes, “he so centred in one purpose the desires of all who were present that all cried out, ‘It is the will of God ! It is the will of God !’ Then with eyes uplifted to heaven, and commanding silence with his hand, he said, ‘Let these words be your war-cry in battle, because they are given to you by God. When an attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised



The Turks offering to make Louis IX. King.
(From the picture by Cabanel.)

by all the soldiers of the Cross—"It is the will of God!" " " "

At once the whole land fell into a state of feverish preparation for the march to the Eastward of the Christian soldiers, who were to wear on back and breast the sacred symbol of the Cross. Before long an army, said to number about three-quarters of a million, had been mustered under the leadership of Godfrey of Bouillon, who had already won fame as a fighter and a general. The Eastward march was begun, and after many adventures and not a few checks and disappointments, the Crusaders came in the dawn of a summer morning within sight of the Holy City.

A halt was made, and as the stern soldiers saw before them the towers and walls of the city which the Psalmist called "the joy of the whole earth," the tears of deep emotion ran down their furrowed cheeks. Many of them fell upon their knees, and gave thanks to God for bringing them in safety to the place which was hallowed by memories of the Redeemer in whose great name they hoped to conquer. Then the march was resumed, and in the fierce fighting and cruel slaughter which followed, the tenderness and mercy of the Prince of Peace were forgotten in bitter hatred of the infidel. When the Crusaders had fought their way within the city they spared neither man, woman, nor child; and when the cruel massacre was over Godfrey of Bouillon was asked to take the royal title, and gave the answer which stands at the head of this chapter.

As a king and a leader Godfrey acquitted himself with honour, and when he died, after manfully defending the Holy City for some years, the Turks found the Christians much less formidable. The tidings reached the Courts of Western Europe that Jerusalem was in great danger, and once more the princes and knights were roused to action. A French abbot named Bernard urged them to assemble an army for the Second Crusade, which, however, ended in failure.

Fifty years later Jerusalem fell into the hands of Saladin, the Saracen ruler of Egypt, and the Third Crusade was organized. It was on this expedition that Richard Cœur de Lion set out, and met with the adventures which have formed the subject of song and story. This was the Norman King of England who would gladly have sold his kingdom to provide money for his military expeditions. We can read of his crusading adventures in Sir Walter Scott's story, "The Talisman," where we find Saladin presented as a chivalrous foeman, "worthy of the steel" of the bravest knight who ever grasped a lance.

Another royal Crusader who took part in this third expedition was the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, so named because of his long red beard. He led his army to Palestine by the overland route, and when he reached Asia Minor lost the greater number of his men, owing partly to the hardships of the march, partly to the repeated attacks of the Turks. One day, while crossing a swollen stream in this mountainous region, the king was swept



THE SARACEN AND THE KNIGHT OF THE COUCHANT LEOPARD.

See the opening chapters of "The Talisman."

away, and caught a chill, from the effects of which he died. The circumstances of his death were so mysterious that the report was spread abroad, and generally believed, that he was not really dead, and that he would come again once more to fight the battles of his people when they should be in need of his protection.

"He sits within a hill near Salzburg yonder," writes Thomas Carlyle, "and a peasant once stumbling into the interior saw the kaiser in his stone cavern. He sat at a marble table leaning upon his elbows, winking, only half asleep. His beard had grown through the table, and streamed out upon the floor. He looked at the peasant one moment, asked him something about the time, then dropped his eyelids again. Not yet time, but will be soon. He is winking as if to awake."

After the Fourth Crusade, which ended in the capture of Constantinople, the children of Western Europe banded themselves to go to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. They were roused to action by a French peasant boy named Stephen, and flocked in vast crowds to the places appointed for mustering the battalions of this strange army. "Even bolts and bars," says an old chonicler, "could not hold them back." And girls as well as boys were seized with the wild desire to fight for the Cross.

A band of German children, numbering some thirty thousand, crossed the Alps and marched down the coasts of Italy, looking for a miraculous pathway through the sea to Palestine. Many of

them died on the way from hardship or lack of food, and when the main body reached Rome they were kindly received by the Pope, and persuaded to return to their homes.

The French children marched to Marseilles, also expecting to find a way made for them across the sea, and when these hopes were disappointed most of them went back home again. A large number, however, accepted the offer of two merchants to carry them in seven small vessels across the Mediterranean ; but they were betrayed, and sold as slaves in the markets of the East.

The effect of this movement among the children was to stir the knights and princes to fresh efforts on behalf of the Holy City. "These children," said the Pope, "reproach us with having fallen asleep, whilst they were flying to the assistance of the Holy Land."



VIII.

LOUIS THE NINTH OF FRANCE.

IN the year preceding that in which King John signed Magna Charta, a prince was born to the royal house of France who was destined to become one of the most famous monarchs of the Middle Ages, and who is known in history as Saint Louis of France.

We have in one of our great libraries an old French book written by a nobleman named De Joinville, who was the personal friend and attendant of this king, and telling of the deeds and character of the royal saint. To read this volume, now six centuries old, is to get an interesting peep into the life of the thirteenth century. Let us look into it for a few moments.

St. Louis, we are told, was born on the anniversary of St. Mark the Evangelist, a day on which it was the custom in France to "carry black crosses." And this, adds the biographer, was prophetic of the numbers of soldiers who were appointed to win death and glory in the Crusades, upon which, as we shall see, King Louis set out in his manhood.

The prince was blessed with a good mother, who "taught him to believe in God and to love Him, and placed about him none but ministers of religion." She made him, while he was yet a

child, attend to all his prayers and listen to the sermons on saints' days. And she often told him that she would rather he were dead than that he should commit a deadly sin.

Louis was only a boy of twelve when he was called upon to ascend the throne of France; and there seems to have been at the time some trouble with the great barons of the land, who probably desired and required a more competent ruler than a young boy. We read how neither Louis nor his mother, a princess of Spain, dared to enter Paris until the citizens came out from the gates with arms in their hands to escort them. The king afterwards told his friend De Joinville how the road into Paris was filled with people, some with and some without weapons, and that "all cried unto our Lord to give him a long and happy life, and to defend and preserve him from his enemies."

After a while the young king fell sick, and lay in such a stupor that those who watched by his bedside thought that he had passed away. Two of the nursing women indeed fell into a dispute about the matter, one asserting that the king was actually dead, and the other that the soul had not yet left his body. The noise of their wrangling roused the king from his stupor, and raising his hand, he begged in a faint voice that a cross should be given to him. This was done, and the attendants, watching him closely, knew that, as he placed his hand upon the cross, he was silently taking the recognized vow to become a Crusader if God

spared him, and to fight for that sacred symbol in Eastern lands.

The king revived, and his mother “exhibited as much joy as could be ; but when she was told by himself that he had ‘taken the cross,’ she showed as much grief as if she had seen him dead.” But the king at once set about redeeming his vow, and before long had landed in Cyprus, where he awaited a party of his knights, among whom was the writer of his biography, who thus describes the first part of his journey :—

“In the month of August we went on board our ships at the Rock of Marseilles. The day we embarked the door of the vessel was opened, and the horses that we were to take with us were led inside. Then they fastened the door and closed it up tightly, as when one sinks a cask, because when the ship is at sea the whole of the door is under water.

“When the horses were in, our sailing master called out to his mariners who were at the prow, ‘Are you all ready?’ And they replied, ‘Sir, let the clerks and priests come forward.’ As soon as they had come nigh he shouted to them, ‘Chant, in God’s name!’ And they with one voice chanted, ‘*Veni, Creator, Spiritus!*’ Then the master called out to his men, ‘Set sail, *in God’s name!*’ And they did so.

“And in a little time the wind struck the sails and carried us out of sight of land, so that we saw nothing but sea and sky ; and every day the wind bore us farther away from the land where we were

born. And thereby I show you how foolhardy he must be who would venture to put himself in such peril with other people's property in his possession, or while in deadly sin; for when you fall asleep at night, you know not but that ere the morning you may be at the bottom of the sea."

Meanwhile King Louis had made great preparations to carry the War of the Cross into Egypt, then in the possession of the Saracens, and had collected huge stores of provisions. When he set sail "it was a fine sight to behold, for it seemed as if the whole sea, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with sails." Landing in Egypt, the king set out at once towards Babylon, the city we now call Cairo. "Whosoever wished to kill a serpent outright," said the king's advisers, "should crush its head."

We have not space to tell of the progress of the king's campaign, which, though it ended in disaster, was conducted with energy, and was, on the whole, distinguished by a spirit of fairness and clemency unusual in that rough age. De Joinville describes it carefully, telling how cleverly his master outwitted the enemy; how the Saracens made use of "Greek fire," a highly inflammable compound of sulphur, gum, pitch, petroleum, and oil, which was projected in the form of fireballs from hollow tubes, and could only be extinguished by the use of vinegar or sand; and how the Saracens at one time offered to crown the crusading leader as their king if he would forsake the Cross for the Crescent.

Later in his life King Louis set out on a second

crusade, and died during its progress. In the opinion of many of his own subjects he merely wasted his time and substance on these campaigns, but he was, nevertheless, a masterful king, who did well for his country, which was in his day the first power in Europe. He resisted the barons in their oppression of the people, and, strangely enough, acted as umpire in the disputes of Henry the Third of England with the barons of his own realm, who were fighting the battle of the nation. He made the king's justice respected throughout the land of France, and he extended his territory to the shores of the Mediterranean. "After the king's return from beyond the sea," we read in De Joinville's book, "he lived so devoutly that he never wore furs of different colours, nor miniver, nor scarlet cloth, nor gilt stirrups or spurs.

"He used to sit at the foot of his bed, and when the monks who were there spoke of a book that would give him pleasure, he would say to them, 'You shall not read to me, for, after eating, there is no book so pleasant as conversation.'

"Many a time it happened that in the summer he would go and sit down in the wood at Vincennes, with his back to an oak, and make us take our seats around him. And all those who had complaints to make came to him, without hindrance from ushers or other folks.

"Then he asked them with his own lips, 'Is there any one here who has a cause?' Those who had a cause stood up, when he would say to them, 'Silence all, and you shall be dispatched one after

the other.' Then he would call his bishops and say to one of them, 'Dispose of this case for me.' When he saw anything to amend in the words of those who spoke for others, he would correct them with his own lips.

"Sometimes in summer I have seen him, in order to administer justice to the people, come into the garden of Paris dressed in a camlet coat, a surcoat of woollen stuff without sleeves, a black mantle round his neck, his hair well combed and without coif, a hat with white peacock's feathers on his head. Carpets were spread for us to sit down upon around him, and all the people who had business to dispatch stood about in front of him. Then he would have it dispatched in the same manner as I have already described in the wood of Vincennes."



IX.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI, THE LITTLE BROTHER OF THE BIRDS.

WE have seen how St. Louis of France worked for the advancement of civilization and the establishment of law and order. Let us now learn a little about the life of a man who lived at the same time as the sainted king, and worked with the same objects, but in a somewhat different way.

He was a native of the Italian city of Assisi, and his father was a cloth merchant, who, because he made many business journeys to France, and probably derived much profit from his trading in that country, had named his son Francis.

The young man, we read in an old volume of his time, was "very merry and generous, given to jests and songs, going about the city day and night with his kind, most free-handed in spending, so that he seemed to be some mighty prince." His wild ways, however, appear to have troubled the busybodies among the neighbours more than his mother, who would say quietly to those who told her of his prodigality, "What think ye of my son? He shall yet be the son of God by grace."

Other people, not quite so lenient as his mother, had already marked the saving graces in the young man's character. "He was naturally courteous in

manner and word," we read, "never speaking a harmful or shameful word to any one. Nay, indeed, although he was so gay and foolish a youth, yet would he make no reply to those who said shameful things to him." And his biographer tells several stories which go to prove that this seemingly careless young merchant was of a much more serious cast of mind than was generally supposed.

At last the great change came. One evening he was chosen by a gay company to spend after his own fancy the money contributed by his comrades. So he ordered an expensive banquet, after which he led his companions in procession through the city with a wand in his hand; but though his companions sang gay songs as they swung merrily along, he remained silent, and seemed to be sunk in meditation. "And lo! suddenly," writes his biographer, "he was visited by the Lord, and his heart was filled with such sweetness that he could neither speak nor move; nor was he able to feel and hear anything except that sweetness only, which so separated him from his physical senses that had he then been pricked with knives all over at once, he could not have moved from the spot.

"But when his companions looked back and saw him there far off from them, they returned to him in fear, staring at him as one changed into another man. And they asked him, 'What were you thinking about, that you did not come along with us? Perchance you were thinking of taking a wife?'

“To them he replied with a loud voice : ‘Truly have you spoken, for I thought of taking to myself a bride, nobler, and richer, and fairer than ever you have seen.’ And they mocked at him. But this he said not of his own accord, but inspired of God ; for the bride herself was true Religion whom he took unto him, nobler, richer, and fairer than others in her poverty.”

Not long afterwards Francis set out on a pilgrimage to Rome, where he astonished the niggardly givers of alms by “throwing a purse full of gold through the grating of the altar with a loud crash.” Then assuming the rags of a beggar, he asked alms on the steps of St. Peter’s, in order to discipline himself, considering that the loathing with which he was inspired by the filth and misery of the poor was a feeling of which he ought to be ashamed. On his return home he also forced himself to minister to the lepers of the town ; and having done this, considered that he had gained “perfect mastery over himself.”

A certain friar now erected for him in a solitary spot a little hut where he could retire and pray. It was built of rough logs smoothed with a hatchet, but in the eyes of Francis it was too splendid. “If you wish me to remain here,” he said to his friend, “make it within and without of branches of trees and clay. When my Lord remained in the desert, and fasted forty days and forty nights, He did not even make for Himself a cell, but found shelter amongst the rocks of the mountain.”

Before long Francis began to preach and to

teach the poor people, and in time he became the founder of the Order of Franciscan Brothers, who vowed themselves to utter poverty and to entire forgetfulness of self in the service of their Lord and Master. After a few years the order increased in numbers, and missionaries were sent to England, France, Spain, Germany, and Hungary, to preach to the people the simple gospel of the Founder of Christianity, and to exhort them to meekness, obedience, and loyal submission to the will of God.

Francis himself was in all matters of discipline and gentleness the example of his followers. "He had a singular and intimate love of all God's creatures," we are told, "and he especially loved a certain little bird which is called the lark, or by the people the cowled lark. And he used to say of it: 'Sister lark hath a cowl like one of my friars; and she is a humble bird, because she goes willingly by the road to find there any food. But flying she praises God very sweetly, like a good friar, whose conversation is always in the heavens, and whose intent is always to the praise of God. She gives an example to the friars that they should not have delicate and coloured garments, but common in price and colour.' "

"If I could speak with the emperor," he would also say, "I would persuade him that, for the love of God and me, he would make a special law that no man should snare or kill our sisters the larks, nor do them any harm. Also, that all chief magistrates of cities and lords of castles and villages

should, every year, on the day of the Lord's nativity, compel men to scatter wheat and other grain on the roads outside cities and castles, that our sister larks and all other birds might have to eat on that most solemn day; and that, out of reverence for the Son of God, all who have oxen and asses should be obliged that night to provide them with abundant and good fodder; and also, that on that day the poor should be most bountifully fed by the rich."

The gentle spirit of such a man as Francis of Assisi, influencing his followers, whom he sent out, as we have seen, "into all lands," was bound to have a civilizing and refining influence in a rough and uncouth age. And though he enjoined poverty, he was the determined enemy of dirt. He especially loved water, we are told, and treated it with particular reverence. "Hence, when he washed his hands, he would select a place where he would not tread the water underfoot."

He was a lover of the beautiful, too, like the Greek of olden days who said that if a man had two loaves he ought to sell one and buy lilies. He would tell the gardener not to cultivate *all* the ground for vegetables and herbs, but to set aside some part to produce green plants, which should in their time bear flowers for the friars, for love of Him who was called "the Flower of the Field" and "the Lily of the Valley."

The rule of the Franciscan friars was very simple and very severe. The brothers were to own no worldly goods, were to labour continually, and to

pray without ceasing. During the lifetime of their saintly founder the Franciscans kept loyally to the spirit and letter of the rule ; but after the death of Francis many of the friars appear to have lost their first enthusiasm and unselfishness, and to have become greedy and lazy.

The friars of whom the poet Chaucer tells in his "Canterbury Tales" were no longer examples of poverty and humility. One of these brothers was to be found in the company which set out from London to make the famous pilgrimage to Canterbury. He was a man "wanton and merry," one who was fond of "dalliance and fair language." He "sweetly heard confession, and was an easy man to give penance." Moreover, he knew all the taverns in the town, and could sing a good song with the best, and, sad to say,

"Sometimes he lisped for very wantonness
To make his English sweet upon his tongue."

A merry man, self-seeking, and careless,—

"His eyes both twinkled in his head aright
As do the bright stars in the frosty night."

Such had the typical friar become about a hundred years after the death of St. Francis of Assisi. But as we have said, the members of the order did good work in spreading Christianity among the poor and in helping forward the progress of civilization.

X.

SIR BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN.

ENGLISH history tells us a great deal about the brave deeds of Edward the Black Prince, whose tomb is in the noble minster at Canterbury; and one of the stories upon which the writers of our history books love to dwell is that of the prince's capture of King John of France at the battle of Poitiers, and his courteous treatment of his royal prisoner.

"The day of the battle, at night," we read in an old book of the time, "the prince gave a supper in his lodgings to the French king and to most of the great lords that were prisoners. The prince caused the king and his son to sit at one table, and other lords, knights, and squires at the others; and the prince always served the king very humbly, and would not sit at the king's table, although he requested him. He said he was not qualified to sit at the table with so great a prince as the king was. Then he said to the king, 'Sir, for God's sake, make no bad cheer, though your will was not accomplished this day. For, sir, the king, my father, will certainly bestow on you as much honour and friendship as he can, and will agree with you so reasonably that you shall ever after be friends. And, sir, I think you ought to rejoice,

though the battle be not as you will; for you have this day gained the high honour of prowess, and have surpassed all others on your side in valour.' ”

In this manner the noble young prince tried to console the king for his defeat and capture, thus showing that he was in truth what the poet Chaucer would have called “a very perfect gentle knight,” and true to the vows which he had taken when he was admitted to the order of knighthood before the battle of Crécy, on the sands at La Hogue.

He lived in that period of history known as the Age of Chivalry, and in many ways he was one of the pattern knights of the time. The institution of knighthood was one of the means of civilizing the rough barons and princes of the Middle Ages. It gave those fierce, quarrelsome fighters a noble ideal of life, which is well expressed in the words of Tennyson's great King Arthur:—

“ My knights are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the king.”

The priests of the time encouraged the formation of orders of knighthood, and the whole ceremony of creating a knight was connected with religious observances. Before a warrior could claim the honour of knighthood he spent many hours in the company of the monks, who explained to him all that was meant by knightly service—how he must aid the oppressed; be courteous to women and helpless children; and fight the battles of the

Most High, not only with sword and spear, but also with spiritual weapons, against his own lower nature.

The candidate also spent a whole night in church or chapel before he was knighted, keeping lonely vigil near his sword and armour, which were usually laid before the altar. (See p. 90.) It was the monks or priests who, on the following morning, prepared him for the ceremony and equipped him with armour and weapons. On the altar he laid his sword and solemnly dedicated it to the service of God. Then he knelt before his monarch or some knight of great renown, and was given the accolade—a light blow on the shoulder with the flat of a sword—and exhorted to be faithful and bold in the name of the Most High.

Of course there were many unworthy knights who thought little of the solemn vows which they had taken ; but on the whole, the Age of Chivalry, which covered the period from the time of William the Conqueror to the sixteenth century, was marked by many advances towards more orderly and civilized life in Europe. The knights were the champions of law and order, and they enforced gentleness and courtesy to women, the weak, and the oppressed. Some of them, like the Black Prince, maintained a high ideal of what was expected of them, and many shining examples of knighthood distinguished the time of our King Edward the Third.

One of those who won great renown for his courtesy and courage was a French knight named



YOUTH AND AGE.

*(From the Painting by H. Windsor Fry, R.B.A., in the Walker Art Gallery. By
Permission of the Corporation of Liverpool.)*

“The glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men
is the grey head.”

Bertrand du Guesclin, who rose in time to become Constable or Commander-in-chief of the forces of the King of France. At one time he was made prisoner by the soldiers of the Black Prince, and obtained his deliverance by his ready wit. Let the old chronicler tell the story in his own way.

“Now let us speak of the deliverance of Sir Bertrand du Guesclin.

“After that the Prince of Wales was returned into Aquitaine, and his brother, the Duke of Lancaster, into England, and every lord into his own, Sir Bertrand du Guesclin was still prisoner with the prince and with Sir John Chandos, and could not come to his ransom; which was sore displeasing to King Henry, if he might have mended it.

“And so it happened after, as I was informed, that on a day the prince called to him Sir Bertrand du Guesclin and demanded of him how he did. He answered and said, ‘Sir, it was never better with me. It is reason that it should be so, for I am in prison with the most renowned knight of the world.’ ‘With whom is that?’ said the prince. ‘Sir,’ quoth he, ‘that is with Sir John Chandos; and, sir, it is said, in the realm of France and in other places, that ye fear me so much that ye dare not let me out of prison; the which to me is full great honour.’

“The prince, who understood well his words, then said to Sir Bertrand: ‘Sir, then ye think that we keep you for fear of your chivalry. Nay, think it not, for I swear by St. George that it is

not so. Therefore pay for your ransom a hundred thousand franks, and ye shall be delivered.'

"Sir Bertrand, who desired greatly to be delivered and heard on what terms he might depart, took the prince with that word and said, 'Sir, in the name of God, so be it : I will pay no less.' And when the prince heard him say so, he would then gladly have repented himself ; and also some of his council came to him and said, 'Sir, ye have not done well, so lightly to put him to his ransom.' And so they would have gladly caused the prince to have revoked that covenant.

"But the prince, who was a true and noble knight, said : 'Since we have agreed thereto, we will not break our promise. It would be to us a great rebuke, shame, and reproach if we should not put him to ransom, seeing that he is content to pay such a great sum as a hundred thousand franks.'

"So after this accord Sir Bertrand du Guesclin was right busy, and studied daily how to get this sum for his ransom ; and did so much with the aid of the French king and of his friends, and of the Duke of Anjou, who loved him entirely, that he paid in less than a month a hundred thousand franks. And so he departed, and went to serve the Duke of Anjou with two thousand fighting men in Provence."

Du Guesclin met his death while making an attempt to drive the English from a castle in France. The fortress was taken by his men, and the leader was summoned to deliver the keys.

At once the latter appeared at the gateway holding the keys in his hand. "I will deliver them to none but to Sir Bertrand du Guesclin," he cried. "He is here," said one of the French leaders, pointing to the body of the constable; and the English knight stepping forward, reverently placed the keys in the hands of the dead hero.

Another bright ornament of knighthood was the Chevalier Bayard, a French nobleman of the fifteenth century, who is always spoken of as the knight "without fear and without reproach."

At one time there was a war between France and Spain. Both countries claimed certain parts of Italy, and so the fighting was done on Italian soil. One day the French and Spanish found themselves on opposite sides of a river. There was a bridge between them which the French held and could easily defend. The Spanish commander knew of a ford some distance down the stream; and he proposed to draw the French away from the bridge, so that his men might capture it.

Mustering a body of troops, he went to the ford, as if he were intending to cross it. The French, on seeing him move, abandoned their post at the bridge and marched toward the ford. The bridge being thus left undefended, a body of two hundred Spaniards suddenly appeared and marched directly toward it. Bayard saw that not a moment was to be lost. Hastily donning his armour, he leapt into the saddle, and spurring his horse, was on the bridge before the Spaniards could reach it.

The Spaniards quickly arrived ; but Bayard stood upon the defensive, and, swinging his heavy broadsword, he slew an enemy with every blow. The Spaniards thought him some demon, and checked their furious charge. Meanwhile a band of French horsemen rushed like a whirlwind to the bridge, and drove the Spaniards back to the farther side. After this exploit men said of Bayard, "Single, he has the might of an army."

It had always been Bayard's wish that he might die in battle. And this wish was granted.

In 1524 he was fighting under a French commander named Bonnivet. Want of supplies and sickness among his men compelled the latter to retreat. The Spaniards placed men in ambush along the road which the French had to take. From one of these hidden foes the Chevalier Bayard received his death-wound. A comrade helped him from his horse, and laid him under the shadow of a tree.

Bayard knew well that he was dying. He charged his friend to turn his face toward the foe, and then to have a care for his own safety. When the Spaniards reached the spot they found the brave leader still breathing.

The Spanish general showed him every care, and a priest was brought to console him in his last moments. And thus, loved by friends and admired by foes, the "knight without fear and without reproach" ended his wonderful life.

XI.

JOAN OF ARC, THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

EARLY in the fifteenth century clouds and darkness had settled over the kingdom of France. War was going on with the English, who promised at that time to become the conquerors of the whole country, for the King of France lacked all the necessary qualities of a leader in those rough days. Paris had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and the English forces were besieging Orleans.

When affairs seemed to be at their worst, there came before the French commander a peasant girl of seventeen years, named Joan, who made the astounding statement that she had been sent by God to deliver the country from the English foe. She had seen celestial visions, she said, and heard heavenly voices, which urged her to "go forth to the help of the King of France."

She was questioned by the commander, who learnt that this "warrior maid" came from Lorraine, and that she was a native of the village of Domrémy, where she had spent the whole of her life spinning and knitting with her mother at home, or helping her brothers to tend the herds among the hills. She loved the services of the Church, and had been accustomed to spend

a great deal of her time in the woods near her home. She was thirteen years of age when she first heard the heavenly voices, and she was confident that if she could get command of the French army she would, "in the name of Jesus," drive the English from before the walls of Orleans.

She had told her father of her mission before setting out for the camp of the French commander, and he had sworn to kill her rather than let her leave his protection. But she had said to him, "I must go to the king, even if I wear my limbs to the very knees. I had far rather rest and spin by my mother's side, for this is no work of my own choosing ; but I must go and do it."

Learned men were brought in, and from their books they proved to their own satisfaction that the girl was mistaken. "There is more in God's book than in yours," she said, fearlessly but modestly ; and the commander now made up his mind to send her to the king, who was as yet uncrowned. "Go, go," he said, "and let whatever good can come of it." Then he took an oath of the men-at-arms under whose escort she was to travel that they would conduct her safely to Charles of France.

With the simplicity of true greatness she approached the monarch, whom it is said she knew at once from the rest of the men near him, though there was nothing to distinguish him outwardly, and dropping upon her knees before him said, "Gentle Dauphin, my name is Joan the Maid. The heavenly King sends me to declare that

you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims, and you shall be lieutenant of the heavenly King, who is the King of France." Then she begged of him to give to her, the shepherd girl of seventeen summers, the command of a body of troops. "Give me some men-at-arms and lead me to Orleans, and I will then show you signs. The sign I am to give you is to raise the siege of Orleans."

At last the king consented. Arrayed in white armour and seated on a black horse, with a small axe in her hand, the Maid rode forth, attended by two pages, two heralds, a chaplain, and special guards ; while an army of ten thousand men followed her from Chinon on the march to Orleans.

"To Chinon by the blue Vienne
She came, the heavenly-hearted Maid,
And boys and babes she turned to men,
And men to gods through Christ her aid,
And one and all she led them forth
To battle in the wasted North."

When she drew near to Orleans she sent letters to the English, bidding them raise the siege and "yield to the king." These orders were, of course, treated with derision ; but before long the English knew to their cost that a new and irresistible power had entered into the struggle against them, and the shepherd girl from Domrémy had earned her triumphant title of the Maid of Orleans.

The coronation of Charles now took place at Rheims, the Maid standing by with her white banner in her hand while the ceremony was performed. Then she expressed a wish to leave for



JOAN OF ARC.
(After the picture by Bastien Lepage.)

home. "O gentle king," she said, "the pleasure of God is done." The archbishop and the monarch himself urged her to remain. "Would it were the king's pleasure," she said, "that I might go and keep sheep once more with my sisters and brothers ; they would be so glad to see me again." But she was prevailed upon to continue her work as a military leader, and took part in other campaigns.

The land, however, was divided against itself ; and falling into the hands of a faction, she was sold to the English, who took her to Rouen in chains, cast her into a cell, and fastened her to a beam so that she could not stir, so great was their fear of her power as a witch.

Before long she was brought to trial, and the examination lasted for no less than a year. She was charged with having "dressed herself in soldier's clothes, and having committed murder with weapons of war ; that she had given out to the common people that she was a messenger from God and a sharer of the secrets of the Most High." The poor girl had to face a tribunal of no less than sixty-two judges. They threatened her with death by fire as a heretic. "I will not say aught else than I have already spoken, and were I even to see the fire I should say the same. Even if you tear me limb from limb, and even if you kill me, I will not tell you anything further. And even were I forced to do so, I should afterwards declare that it was only because of your tortures that I had spoken differently."

Then came the sentence of death. "Alas! am I to be treated so horribly and cruelly?" she cried. But it was chiefly the degradation of the form of death which troubled her. She wished to die as a soldier. "Must my body," she cried, "pure as from birth, be consumed and reduced to ashes? I would rather be beheaded seven times over than to die in this wise." But her protests were unheeded, and on a sweet May morning in the year 1431 she met her death in the market-place of Rouen as fearlessly as she had faced the enemies of France or her judges. "My voices did not deceive me," she cried. Then with the name of Jesus upon her lips she passed away, and the rude soldiers muttered, "We are lost! We have burned a saint."

Many great writers have tried to do justice to the wonderful career of the shepherd maid of Domrémy who saved her country in its hour of need. "What is to be thought of her?" writes De Quincey. "What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and the forests of Lorraine that rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitude, to a station in the van of armies, and to the right hand of kings?"

"But the poor forsaken girl drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang the songs that rose in her native Domrémy as the echoes to the departing steps of the English invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances which celebrated in rapture

the redemption of France. No ! for her voice was then silent ; no ! for her feet were dust.

“To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life—that was thy destiny ; and not for a moment was it hidden from thyself. Life, thou saidst, is short, and the sleep which is in the grave is long ; let me use that life, so transitory, for the glory of those heavenly dreams destined to comfort the sleep which is so long !

“In her last fight upon the scaffold she triumphed gloriously ; victoriously she tasted the stings of death. For all she had died—died amid the tears of ten thousand enemies ; died amid the drums and trumpets of armies ; died amid peals redoubling upon peals, volleys upon volleys, from the saluting clarions of martyrs.”



XII.

THE HEROES OF THE SWISS.

IN reading about the German king Henry the Fowler, we learnt how it was the custom for the ruler of Germany to be chosen by certain princes and nobles who were called "electors." The term comes into our English history, for our own King George the First was also, as you will remember, Elector of Hanover.

Near the end of the thirteenth century the electors chose as King of Germany a nobleman who is known in history as Rudolph of Hapsburg. Before the Great War we often heard the Austrian royal house of the present day referred to as "the Hapsburgs," and this Rudolph was founder of their line. He lived at first in a castle perched upon a lofty rock in the northern part of the German territory which is now known as Switzerland.

Now Rudolph, who lived at the time of our brave King Edward the First, was a German patriot, and thought it a pity for the king of his country to trouble himself about ruling over Italy as well ; so he did not go to Rome to be crowned as head of the Holy Roman Empire. His chief object as a ruler was to make a strong and united country of Germany itself.

He knew that while the kings of Germany had been striving to keep up the connection with Italy



A Candidate for Knighthood keeping Vigil.
(From the painting by J. Pettie, R.A., in the Tate Gallery.)

and make themselves what they foolishly termed "lords of the world," their own country had been grievously neglected. For lack of a strong central government there had sprung up in various parts of the empire, both in Germany and Italy, certain "leagues" of states or cities which lay close to each other. For example, not far from Rudolph's own castle there were three districts which were banded together for mutual protection, and were known as the Forest Cantons.

The rulers of Germany had neglected their plain duty of affording protection and good government to their own people. They were now to pay the price of their folly, as we shall presently see.

The men of the Forest Cantons were a splendid race of hardy, independent mountaineers. The very neglect of their ruler had made them all the more self-reliant and unwilling to look up to any master or to pay him taxes. They formed themselves into what is known as a federation, and when the Hapsburg house sent to demand payment of dues from them, the leading men of the union met together; and although for the moment they could not throw off the yoke, they solemnly vowed to spend their means, and if necessary their lives, in winning freedom for the Forest Cantons. This was the beginning of the history of that European country which is now known as Switzerland, and which was named after the Schwyz, who inhabited one of the three districts that led the way in revolt against the Hapsburgs.

In justice to the memory of Rudolph, however, we must mention that he was personally favourable to the men of the Forest Cantons. It was in the time of his tyrannical son Albert that the struggle began which, after lasting for about four centuries, ended in the founding of a new European state. This nobleman sent his overseers into the cantons with powers of life and death, and instructions to use any means, however cruel, of collecting the taxes from the mountaineers. It is said that one of these overseers, a tyrant named Gessler, went one day with his men-at-arms into the market-place of the little town of Altorf, placed his cap on the top of a pole, and commanded the people of the place to bow down before it. Most of them did so in fear and trembling; but one man, named William Tell, refused to obey the order, and was promptly taken before the Austrian official.

Gessler prided himself upon his merry wit, and invented for the rebel a very ingenious punishment. Tell had the reputation of being one of the best archers of the countryside. "Let him show his skill," said the tyrant, "by shooting at an apple to be placed on the head of his son Albert." Then the father clove the apple in twain, and afterwards, when an opportunity offered, pierced the heart of the tyrant with a second shaft. So runs the famous legend, which one wishes were really true, for it expresses so well the brave resistance of the men of the time to a degrading tyranny.

An English poet thus describes the scene of Tell's great trial. The father has just been told that his skill will be proved the greater if he hits a *small* apple.

Tell. True—true—I didn't think of that ; I wonder
I did not think of that. Give me some chance
To save my boy. [*Throws away the apple.*] I will
not murder him

If I can help it—for the honour of
The form thou wear'st, if all the heart is gone.

Gessler. Well, choose thyself.

[*Hands a basket of apples. Tell takes one.*]

Tell. Have I a friend among
The lookers on ?

Verner. Here, Tell !

Tell. I thank thee, Verner ! Take the boy
And set him, Verner, with his back to me.
Set him upon his knees ; and place this apple
Upon his head, so that the stem may front
me—

Thus, Verner ; charge him to keep steady—tell
him

I'll hit the apple ! Verner, do all this
More briefly than I tell it thee.

Albert. May I not speak with him before I go ?

Tell. My boy ! [*Holding out his arms to him.*]

Alb. My father ! [*Running into Tell's arms.*]

Tell. If thou canst bear it, should not I ? Go
now,

My son, and keep in mind that I can shoot.

Go, boy ; be thou but steady, I will hit
 The apple. Go. God bless thee ! Go.
 My bow ! *[Sarnem gives the bow.]*
 Thou wilt not fail thy master, wilt thou ? Thou
 Hast never failed him yet, old servant. No,
 I'm sure of thee—I know thy honesty ;
 Thou'rt staunch—staunch ; I'd deserve to find
 thee treacherous,
 Could I suspect thee so. Come, I will stake
 My all upon thee ! Let me see my quiver.

[Retires.]

Ges. Give him a single arrow. *[To an attendant.]*

Tell. Is't so you pick an arrow, friend ?
 The point, you see, is bent, the feather jagged ;
 That's all the use 'tis for. *[Breaks it.]*

Ges. Let him have another. *[Tell examines it.]*

Tell. Why, 'tis better than the first,
 But yet not good enough for such an aim
 As I'm to take. 'Tis heavy in the shaft ;
 I'll not shoot with it ! *[Throws it away.]* Let me
 see my quiver.

Bring it ! 'tis not one arrow in a dozen
 I'd take to shoot with at a dove, much less
 A dove like that ! What is't you fear ? I'm but
 A naked man, a wretched naked man—
 Your helpless thrall, alone in the midst of you,
 With every one of you a weapon in
 His hand. What can I do in such a strait
 With all the arrows in that quiver ? Come,
 Will you give it me, or not ?

Ges. It matters not.
 Show him the quiver.

[Tell kneels and picks out an arrow, then secretes one in his vest.]

Tell. I'm ready ! Keep silence, for *[To the people.]* Heaven's sake ! and do not stir, and let me have Your prayers—your prayers ; and be my witnesses That, if his life's in peril from my hand, 'Tis only for the chance of saving it. Now, friends, for mercy's sake keep motionless And silent !

[Tell shoots, and a shout of exultation bursts from the crowd.]

Ver. *[Rushing in with Albert]* *[The boy is safe ! no hair of him is touched !]*

Alb. Father, I'm safe—your Albert's safe ! Dear father,

Speak to me ! speak to me !

Ver. He cannot, boy !

Open his vest and give him air.

[Albert opens his father's vest, and an arrow drops. Tell starts, fixes his eyes on Albert, and clasps him to his breast.]

Tell. My boy ! my boy !

Ges. For what

Hid you that arrow in your breast ? Speak, slave !

Tell. To kill thee, tyrant, had I slain my boy !

Liberty . . .

Would, at thy downfall, shout from every peak !

My country then were free.

The story of Arnold von Winkelried is, however, part of sober history, and is quite as stirring as the story of William Tell.

It was in the year 1386, nearly a hundred years after the time of Gessler, that Duke Leopold of Austria marched against the Swiss town of Sempach, to punish the "low-born" mountaineers for refusing to pay their dues to his noble house. He was at the head of 4,000 horse and 1,500 foot, while the men of the Forest Cantons numbered only 1,300, and were posted in the woods round the little lake of Sempach.

Although the duke's forces were so superior in numbers, some of his friends advised him to wait for reinforcements. But the younger knights in his retinue were impatient to begin. "We will soon hew down that handful of peasants," they cried in lofty scorn. Then the horsemen were bidden to dismount, for their steeds were weary; and the knights called their menials to lop off the long toes of their boots, which would have impeded them while fighting on foot. The force was next drawn up in a solid body of spearmen protected by a hedge of bristling steel.

Meanwhile the gallant Swiss had been eagerly watching the preparations made to receive them. Few of them wore armour. Some had wooden boards fastened upon their arms to serve as shields, while their weapons were halberds, swords, or battle-axes. They sent up a fervent prayer to God for help, and old tradition tells that just at that moment a rainbow appeared, which was instantly taken as a sign of heavenly favour, and a rush was made upon the spears. But the line was unbroken



THE DEATH OF WINKELRIED.

(*Gebr. Wehrli, Photo.*)

by the onset of the brave mountaineers, and they fell back with heavy loss.

The flanks of the Austrian force now began to advance slowly, so as to enclose the Swiss in a merciless ring. The mountaineers stood for a moment in dismay ; but one of their leaders, Arnold von Winkelried of Unterwalden, seeing at a glance the sole remaining opportunity of deliverance, cried out, "Stay ; I will make a way through the ranks. Follow me ; and when I fall, take care of my wife and boy." Then without further delay—

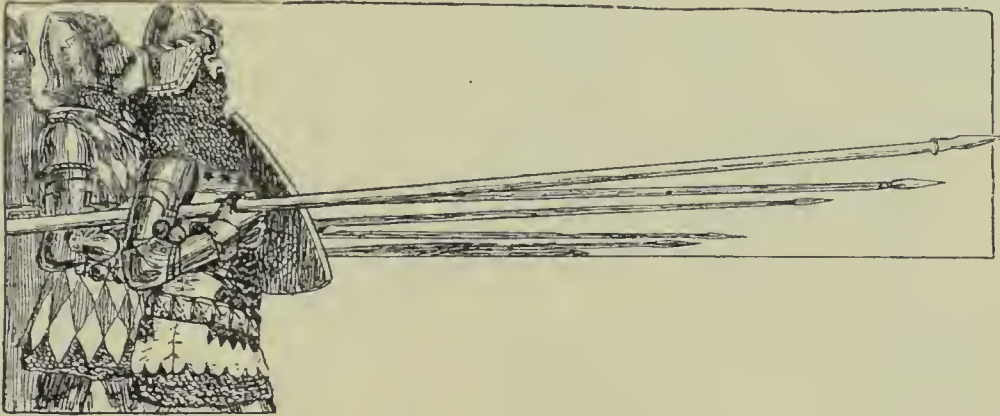
"He rushed against the Austrian band
In desperate career,
And with his body, breast, and hand
Bore down each hostile spear.

"Four lances splintered on his crest,
Six shivered in his side ;
Still on the serried files he pressed—
He broke their ranks and died."

Thus "death made way for liberty." The Swiss, following their devoted leader, leapt into the breach made in the line of spears and laid about them manfully. The Austrians fell back in disorder, and before long some two thousand of their number lay dead upon the field. Duke Leopold fought like a hero, and fell at last in the thickest of the fight. The Swiss lost only about two hundred men. On the following day they gave thanks for their deliverance from oppression, and reverently carried the body of Duke Leopold to the family burying-place.

The battle of Sempach may be regarded as the turning-point in the history of the Swiss as a

nation. Their league was gradually enlarged by the accession of other cantons. At first they wished only for freedom from the oppression of the great landowners, and had no idea of setting up a separate and distinct state apart from the empire, to which they were proud to belong. But as the years rolled on they became more independent, though it was not till the time of our Charles the First that their country was recognized as quite free from outside control.



XIII.

MARCO POLO, THE FIRST OF THE ADVENTURERS.

WE have seen how Germany and Italy were unequally yoked together during the Middle Ages, and how this often caused the German king, who got himself crowned in Rome as emperor, to neglect the government of his own country. One of the results of this was the setting up of various states and independent cities, within the empire, indeed, but practically free from any central control. We know how Switzerland gradually broke away from imperial rule. Let us now glance at the state of affairs in Northern Italy.

Here there were, during the Middle Ages, a number of what might be called "city states," which professed allegiance to Pope or emperor, but were for the most part independent of either. They were mostly wealthy trading cities, being situated on or near the great routes which led from Western to South-Eastern Europe, and the rich merchants who lived in them delighted to spend their money in erecting beautiful buildings and in encouraging the artists, sculptors, prose writers, and poets of the time.

One of the foremost of these city states was Venice, which might almost be said to have constituted an empire ; for the doge or duke of the



THE FISHERMAN AND THE RING. (*See p. 103.*)

city claimed authority over wide territories in Italy, as well as the coasts not only of the Adriatic Sea or the Gulf of Venice, but also of the eastern Mediterranean. It was, of course, the geographical position of the city which had been the chief cause of her rise to wealth and power, and in time the Adriatic Sea came to be regarded as under the direct control of the Venetians.

The rich produce of the East was brought on the backs of camels to the ports on the shores of the Levant. The ships of Venice and other trading cities visited these ports laden with European merchandise, and an exchange took place. Then the Italian merchants set out for home to sell the goods at a great profit in their own markets, whence they were distributed over the whole of Western Europe. In the fourteenth century, the time of her greatest power, Venice had twenty-five thousand sailors, and a fleet of three thousand merchant ships.

One day the Pope sent to the Doge of Venice a richly jewelled ring, with which he commanded the head of the Venetian state to "wed the Adriatic," at the same time prescribing the method of the strange ceremony, which was to be performed on Ascension Day of each succeeding year. "Take this ring," ran the papal letter, "as a token of dominion over the sea, and wed her every year, you and your successors for ever, in order that all may know that the sea belongs to Venice, and is subject to her as a bride is subject to her husband."

The largest and most magnificent of the Venetian galleys was one named the *Bucentaur*, which was richly decorated in scarlet and gold. On Ascension Day, therefore, the Doge of Venice, seated upon a throne on the deck of this vessel, and surrounded by a brilliant company, was rowed out into the Adriatic. When the ship was some distance from land the duke left his throne and went to a small opening in the stern, from whence he threw the ring into the sea with the words, "We espouse thee, O Sea, in token of true and lasting domination."

Of course the ring with its costly stones was, as a rule, lost beyond recall, but there is a story that on one occasion it was found again. A fisherman plying his trade not far from the city caught a fish, and cutting it open, found a ring within it which he knew at once to be that with which the doge had performed the ceremony of wedding the sea. At once he made his way to the ducal palace, and, craving audience of the doge while sitting in council, presented the ring to him on bended knee. The magnifico graciously received it, and rewarded the man for his honesty. Whether the ring was used again, or whether the people took its return as an omen of disaster, the old chronicler does not tell.

The "true and lasting domination," however, did not last, and it was the enterprise of the Venetians themselves which began the movement that ultimately helped to bring about the downfall of the city as a great trading centre. As time went on, Venetian sailors began to make voyages

beyond the eastern Mediterranean. Some went to Spain, others to France, while on one occasion there was a great stir in the city when it was announced that a Venetian argosy had actually reached the coast of Flanders.

In the thirteenth century another daring Venetian set out with a few companions to travel into Asia. His name was Marco Polo, and he was the son of a wealthy merchant in Venice, who provided the party with the means for the expedition. After a long journey across the strange lands and fearsome deserts of Central Asia, the travellers arrived at the court of Kublai, the khan or ruler of the Tartars, who had his capital in the neighbourhood of the city now known as Peking. The monarch received the adventurers very kindly, showing particular favour to young Marco, and was eager to learn all he could of the far-away Western lands whence his guests had come. The latter were just as eager to become acquainted with the ways of the Mongol prince and his people, and in his book of "Travels," composed in later life while he was imprisoned in Genoa, Marco Polo tells us many wonderful things about them.

The khan was accustomed, he tells us, to go each year to a summer residence at some distance from his capital, and "on such occasions the khan's astrologers, or magicians as they may be termed, sometimes display their skill in a wonderful manner ; for if it should happen that the sky becomes cloudy and threatens rain, they ascend the roof of the palace, and by the force of their

incantations they prevent the rain from falling and stay the tempest ; so that whilst in the surrounding country storms of rain, wind, and thunder are experienced, the palace itself remains unaffected by the elements."

One of the khan's tributary kings, named Kaidu, had a daughter, of whom Marco Polo tells the following story. It reads somewhat like the old Greek story of Atalanta.

"You must know, then, that King Kaidu had a daughter named, in the Tartar language, Aigiarm, which means shining moon. This damsel was so strong that there was no young man in the whole kingdom who could overcome her, but she vanquished them all. Her father, the king, wished to marry her to some one ; but she declined, saying that she would never take a husband till she met with some man who should conquer her by force ; upon which the king, her father, gave her a written promise that she might marry at her own will.

"She now caused it to be proclaimed in different parts of the world that if any young man would come and try strength with her, and should overcome her by force, she would accept him for her husband. This proclamation was no sooner made than many came from all parts to try their fortune.

"The trial was made with great solemnity. The king took his place in the principal hall of the palace, with a large company of men and women. Then came the king's daughter, in a dress of sendal, very richly adorned, into the middle of the

hall ; and next came the young man, also in a dress of sendal.

“The agreement was, that if the young man overcame her, so as to throw her by force to the ground, he was to have her for wife ; but if, on the contrary, he should be overcome by the king’s daughter, he was to forfeit to her a hundred horses.

“In this manner the damsel gained more than ten thousand horses, for she could meet with no one able to conquer her ; which was no wonder, for she was so well made in all her limbs, and so tall and strongly built, that she might almost be taken for a giantess.

“At last there came the son of a rich king, who was very beautiful and young ; he was accompanied with a very fine retinue, and brought with him a thousand beautiful horses.

“Immediately on his arrival he announced that he was come to try his strength with the lady. King Kaidu received him very gladly, for he was very desirous to have this youth for his son-in-law, knowing him to be the son of the King of Pamar ; on which account Kaidu privately told his daughter that he wished her on this occasion to let herself be vanquished. But she said she would not do so for anything in the world.

“Thereupon the king and queen took their places in the hall, with a great attendance of both sexes, and the king’s daughter presented herself as usual, and also the king’s son, who was remarkable no less for beauty than for strength.



Dante and Beatrice.

(Reproduced by permission of the Liverpool Corporation.)

Henry Holiday.

"Now when they were brought into the hall, it was agreed, as the conditions of the trial, that if the young prince were conquered he should forfeit the thousand horses he had brought with him as his stake.

"This agreement having been made, the wrestling began ; and all who were there, including the king and queen, wished heartily that the prince might be the victor, that he might be the husband of the princess. But, contrary to their hopes, the king's daughter gained the victory, and the young prince was thrown on the pavement of the palace, and lost his thousand horses.

"There was not one person in the hall who did not lament his defeat. After this the king took his daughter with him into many battles, and not a cavalier in the host displayed so much valour ; and at last the damsel rushed into the midst of the enemy, and seizing upon a horseman, carried him off to her own people and married him !"

With such "traveller's tales" Marco Polo entertained the people of the Italian cities after he had spent some seventeen years in Central and Eastern Asia. He was one of the first of the great travellers who were to open out the world beyond the Mediterranean, and of whom we are to read in later chapters of this book. And when this great work of exploration and discovery had been at last accomplished, and men had dared the perils of unknown seas and lonely deserts, Venice was no longer the centre of the commercial world, as she had been in the days of her glory.

XIV.

DANTE AND BEATRICE.

OUR stories up to this point have dealt largely with fighters, rulers, and men of action. Let us now consider the life and work of one who made a deep impression upon his own time, and upon all succeeding ages, not with the sword, but with the pen. This was a poet of whose work it has been finely said that there runs through it "a strain like the first falling murmur which reaches the ear in some remote meadow, and prepares us to look upon the sea."

He was a native of Florence, one of the wealthy Italian cities of which we have been reading, and his name was Dante Alighieri. He was born in the year 1265—the year in which Simon de Montfort was killed at the battle of Evesham—and he was the son of an ancient and wealthy Florentine house. We have little exact information of his early life, but we are told by a chronicler of his time that he grew up to be "a great scholar in almost every branch of learning, albeit he was a layman ; he was a great poet and philosopher, and a perfect rhetorician alike in prose and verse, a very noble orator in public speaking, supreme in rhyme, with the most polished and beautiful style which in our language ever was up to his time and beyond it."

The same writer tells us that Dante was "one of the governors" of Florence, and that he opposed a party which ultimately drove him into exile. From this time he was doomed to a life of loneliness and misery; for though the Florentine magistrates invited him to return on condition of making public apology and paying a fine, he would not comply. "If I cannot return without calling myself guilty," he said, "I will never return."

There was now no settled home for the wandering poet and scholar. He stayed for a while, first with one patron, then with another; but such a man, with his proud, earnest nature and his gloomy temper, could hardly be popular anywhere. One day, we are told, a noble duke reproved him for his sadness. "Is it not strange," he asked, "that my poor fool of a jester should make himself so entertaining, while you, a wise man, sit there day after day and say nothing to amuse us at all?" "Nay, it is not strange," said Dante bitterly, "for fools rejoice in folly."

A man with such a bitter tongue could not easily win friends, nor would his company be greatly desired by the pleasure-loving men and women of his time. "This Dante," writes the chronicler from whom we have already quoted, "was haughty and reserved and disdainful, careless of graces, and not easy in his converse with unlearned men." Cast out by his friends, he found a haven of peace in his work; and he spent the last years of his life in writing his great poem, "The Divine Comedy," of which our chronicler says that "it treats in

polished verse, in one hundred chapters or songs, of the existence and condition of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise as loftily as it were possible to treat of them," adding quaintly that the great work was to be "seen and understood by whoso had subtle intellect." It was clearly too difficult for him.

There is one other work of Dante, however, which has been translated from Italian into English by one of our own poets, and which is not quite so hard to understand. It is called the "New Life," and it tells for the most part of the poet's love for a lady named Beatrice, whose name is associated with that of Dante for all time. She was the daughter of Folco Portinari, and the poet first met her as a little child at a Florentine festival when he was a boy of nine. "Her dress of that day," he tells us, "was of a most noble colour, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her very tender age." He did not see her again for nine years, but one day, he writes, "passing through a street she turned her eyes thither, where I stood sorely abashed; and by her unspeakable courtesy she saluted me with so virtuous a bearing that I seemed then and there to behold the very limits of blessedness."

He tells us in another part of his book that "this excellent lady came at last into such favour with all men, that when she passed anywhere folk ran to behold her; and when she drew near unto any, so much truth and simpleness entered into his heart that he dared neither to lift his eyes nor

to return her salutation. She went along crowned and clothed with humility, showing no whit of pride in all that she heard and saw; and when she had gone by it was said by many, 'This is not a woman, but one of the beautiful angels of heaven!' And there were some that said, 'This is surely a miracle. Blessed be the Lord, who hath power to work thus marvellously.' I say that she showed herself so gentle and so full of all perfection that she bred in those who looked upon her a soothing quiet beyond any speech."

Shortly after this entry in Dante's book comes the following:—

"How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow!"

"I was still occupied with this book when the Lord God of justice called my most gracious lady unto Himself. . . . When mine eyes had wept until they were so weary with weeping that I could no longer through them give ease to my sorrow, I bethought me that a few mournful words might stand me instead of tears." So he writes:—

"Beatrice is gone up into high Heaven,
The kingdom where the angels are at peace,
And lives with them, and to her friends is dead.
Not by the frost of winter was she driven
Away, like others, nor by summer heats,
But through a perfect gentleness instead.
For from the lamp of her meek lowliness
Such an exceeding glory went up hence,
That it woke wonder in the Eternal Sire,
Until a sweet desire
Entered Him for that lovely excellence;
So that He bade her to Himself aspire,
Counting this weary and most evil place
Unworthy of a thing so full of grace."

After this, through all the changes of his life, the memory of Beatrice was enshrined in the poet's heart. "There rose up in me a certain day," he tells us, "a strong visible phantasy, wherein I seemed to behold the most gracious Beatrice habited in that crimson raiment which she had worn when I had first beheld her; also she appeared to me of the same tender age as then. And I say most truly that from that hour I thought constantly of her with my most humble and ashamed heart."

In his "Divine Comedy" Dante describes his meeting with her in purgatory.

"I have beheld ere now, at break of day,
The eastern clime all roseate, and the sky
Opposed, one deep and beautiful serene,
And the sun's face so shaded, and with mists
Attempered at his rising, that the eye
Long while endured the sight: thus in a cloud
Of flowers, that from those hands angelic rose,
And down, within and outside of the car,
Fell showering, in white veil with olive wreathed,
A virgin in my view appeared beneath
Green mantle, robed in hue of living flame;
And o'er my spirit, that in former days
Within her presence had abode so long,
No shuddering terror crept. Mine eyes no more
Had knowledge of her; yet there moved from her
A hidden virtue, at whose touch awaked,
The power of ancient love was strong within me."

The poet died at Ravenna, at the comparatively early age of fifty-six, and was buried within the city. About a century later the Florentines begged the body from the people of Ravenna, but were refused; and he rests within the tomb which bears the epitaph, "Here am I, Dante, laid, shut out from my native shores."

XV.

THE POETS OF THE DAWN.

THOSE who, like the old chronicler, find Dante's "Divine Comedy" too difficult to understand, ought at least to remember that the poet did a great service to his country by writing his poem in the Italian language. In his day the language of the scholar was Latin; but like a true patriot, Dante loved his own mother-tongue, and helped to raise it to higher repute among the learned by using it in his immortal works.

The same service which he rendered to Italy was not long afterwards performed for our own country by Geoffrey Chaucer, who wrote his great poem of "The Canterbury Tales," not in the fashionable French of his day, but in such English as could be understood by his own countrymen, though it looks like a foreign tongue to us to-day. Here are a few lines of it:—

"I wil you telle a tale which that I
Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
As provyd by his werdes and his werk.
He is now deed and nayled in his chest,
Now God yive his soule wel good rest!
Fraunces Petrark, the laureat poete,
Highte this clerk, whos rethorique swete
Enlumynd al Ytail of poetrie."

We may understand this a little better as we proceed with the reading of the present chapter.

When Dante was driven from his native city, a certain notary or lawyer named Petrarca accompanied him into exile, and enjoyed the friendship of the great poet. This may partly account for the fact that the notary's son Francesco, who was born in camp before Florence, became in due time one of the most famous men of letters of the Middle Ages. His name, under a different spelling, can be found in the above passage from Chaucer's poem.

Shortly after his birth Francis Petrarch was sent in charge of a servant to his father's home at Incisa. The man wrapped up the baby in a bundle, passed a stick through it like Dick Whittington, and carried his burden over his shoulder. On the way he had to pass through a river, and while making the crossing the future poet almost came to an early end by drowning.

After a while the notary took his son to Avignon, where the boy was put to school. A little later he was sent to Montpellier to study law, but the subject had no charms for the poet. "In the learning of it," he said afterwards, "I cannot be said to have *spent* seven years, but to have *lost* them." On the death of his father he gave up the uncongenial work, and for a time seems to have lived a gay life, attached first to one patron and then to another.

"Don't you recollect," he wrote years afterwards to his brother, "what pains, what useless pains, we took to preserve the exquisite whiteness of our linen; what dressing and undressing there was,

morning and evening ; what fear lest a breath of air should disturb the elegance of our curls, or a passing horse splash our perfumed and gorgeous cloaks, or derange their folds ? But then our shoes ! How they pricked the feet they were meant to protect ! And the curling irons ! How often were our slumbers disturbed by that operation ! What pirate could have squeezed and tortured us more than we squeezed ourselves with our own iron bands ? ”

But this period of foppery did not last very long. Petrarch's father had left him as a legacy—the only one he could leave—a beautifully decorated copy of the works of Cicero. This book became the young man's constant companion, and implanted in him that deep love and admiration for the writers of ancient Rome and Greece which distinguished him throughout the whole of his career. It was difficult in his time to obtain access to the works of the poets and prose writers of the olden days ; but Petrarch did not spare himself. He went, mostly on foot, from town to town, and from one noble house to another, begging for leave to study any manuscript which might be preserved in museum or library. Very often he discovered some parchment the real value of which had been quite unknown to its owner before the poet came to enlighten him.

At the same time he wrote poems of his own in the language of old Rome, and such fame did these win for him that one day he received two letters—one from the Senate of Rome ; another

from the University of Paris, offering to crown him with the wreath of laurel, which would prove to the world that he was the foremost poet of his time. After some hesitation he decided to accept the offer of Rome to crown him as laureate poet, and the ceremony was performed in that city on Easter Day in the year 1341. The poet was dressed in a gorgeous mantle, and was preceded by twelve noble Roman youths clad in brilliant scarlet, and heralded in their turn by trumpeters dressed in no less gorgeous apparel.

It was, however, after the conferment of this honour that Petrarch did his best work as a poet, drawing largely upon the material of the old manuscripts which we have already mentioned, and making known their contents to the readers of his day. Some thirty years after his crowning as laureate it is said that he was visited at Padua by our own poet Geoffrey Chaucer, who was then in Italy on an embassy for King Edward the Third, and who heard from the Italian poet a story which afterwards became the "Clerk's" contribution to the great series known as "The Canterbury Tales." Here is an outline of this story, which greatly delighted the lords and ladies of the Italian courts and castles in the days of Petrarch :—

In the western part of Italy lived a certain marquis named Walter, who was exceedingly beloved by his people because of his wise and gentle government. No one was his equal in birth, nor was any young lord more handsome of counte-

nance and more courteous of bearing. He had one fault, however, and this was an exceeding love of pleasure.

The devoted people grieved over Walter's frivolity, and most earnestly wished that he would marry. "We long to see you happier than you are now," some of them told him one day, "and therefore we beg you to choose a good wife, and thus to ease the minds of your faithful people from their deep anxiety. Let them seek on your behalf the noblest lady in the land."

"My dear friends," said Walter, "I thank you for your interest in me; but I assure you that I am perfectly happy as I am, and at present enjoy my liberty far too well to desire a wife. Certainly I mean to marry when I find a fitting opportunity. I must, however, make my own choice of a wife."

Now, at a very short distance from the castle there was a small and humble village, in which lived a poor man named Janicula with his only child, a maiden known as Griselda.

She was very fair to look on, and had a sweet, gentle voice and manner. Young as she was, the girl had a brave heart, which never sank under the pressure of work or of want; and whether she tended her sheep in the fields or busied herself with her spinning-wheel, or gathered herbs and cresses for her father's poor meal, she was always peaceful and happy.

Now when Lord Walter went hunting he had often seen Griselda, and had heard an account of her virtue and industry. Therefore he determined



THE POET TASSO (1544-1595), WHO OWED MUCH TO PETRARCH, RECITING HIS MASTERPIECES AT THE COURT OF FERRARA
(From the painting by *Eduard Ender*.)

to take her for his bride ; so orders were given in his castle for the preparation of rich jewels and beautiful dresses suited to a lady of high rank. No one, however, knew on whom the choice of the marquis had fallen, and the wedding morning dawned while the people were still wondering who the bride would be.

When the hall was decorated and the banquet ready, and the fine lords and ladies who were invited to the castle began to arrive, there was still no bride to be seen. But the marquis bade his guests follow him to the adjoining village.

Griselda was going about her usual duties, but rather more swiftly than usual, so that she might have time to get a sight of the gay doings of the day. While drawing water at the well she had heard it said that it was the wedding day of Lord Walter, and she thought to herself, "I will stand among the other maidens and watch as the new marchioness goes by this road to the castle."

Hardly had the words escaped her when the marquis came up and called her by name. Setting down her water-cans, she knelt to receive his commands ; and finding he wished to speak to her father, ran to seek the old man.

Then Walter took Janicula aside, saying, "My friend, I am here to ask your permission to marry your daughter."

So strange and so very unexpected a request set the poor old father trembling from head to foot, and he stammered, "That which my lord wishes, let it be."

Then Lord Walter turned to Griselda, and said, "It pleases your father that I should marry you, Griselda; but tell me if you also are willing. You must promise to be obedient in everything, whether I treat you well or ill. Swear this, and I will make you my wife immediately."

Trembling with fear, the maiden said, "If such is your wish, my lord, I consent to be your wife; and I will swear never to disobey you nor resist your wishes."

Griselda could not enter her new home clad in her poor, patched garments; so the rich robes prepared by Walter's orders were now produced, and the ladies led her away that they might attire her as befitted her rank. Next they combed and arranged her long hair, placed a crown on her head, and covered her with jewels.

By this time Griselda looked more lovely than you could imagine, and the marquis gazed at her with fresh admiration as he placed the marriage ring on her finger. Then, lifting her on the back of a snow-white horse, he conducted her to the castle, where there was much feasting and rejoicing till sunset.

* * * * *

Smoothly and happily passed the first year of Griselda's married life, and then a little daughter was born to her, at which the marquis and his people greatly rejoiced.

But now, as if possessed by madness, Lord Walter determined to test the patience of his gentle wife. So he sent a very trustworthy serv-

ant to the chamber of the marchioness, saying, "Madam, I am commanded to take away this child ; pardon me, for I am bound to obey."

He looked so fiercely at the poor baby that Griselda had no other thought but that he was about to take it away and kill it ; yet she uttered neither sigh nor complaint, but humbly asked as a favour that she might give the little child one last kiss. This was permitted ; and, holding the baby on her lap, she lulled and caressed it for a few moments, and then placed it in the messenger's arms, saying, "Take her now and fulfil the bidding of my lord. But I entreat you, hide the little body in some retired spot where no birds of prey may find it."

The marquis then bade the man cover the child warmly and carry it with all secrecy to his sister the countess, who lived in Bologna, and who was prepared to rear it carefully, but without disclosing to whom it belonged. Meanwhile poor Griselda went on quietly in her usual course, and never once mentioned her lost baby.

Several years passed by, and then a son was born, to the joy of the marquis and his people ; but when the boy was nearly two years old, Lord Walter said to Griselda, "Wife, it is no secret that my people have never approved of my marriage with a poor, ignorant maiden. The birth of our son causes them to rebel at the prospect of a ruler after me who is descended from Janicula, and I see no possible course but to do with the boy as we did with his sister."

"I have, nor ever shall have, any will but yours, my lord," was the wife's quiet reply.

The marquis cast his eyes on the ground while she said this, for otherwise he felt sure he must betray his surprise and delight. Yet he maintained his purpose, and left Griselda's chamber without a word.

The same rough man who had carried away the first-born child came for the boy ; and the mother neither wept nor murmured. She was again suffered to think that her child was to die, though the marquis had ordered him to be tenderly reared along with his sister.

When the first child was nearly twelve years old the marquis sent to Rome, commanding some one there to forward letters to him, which should appear as if they had come from the Pope, and should contain permission for him to turn away Griselda and to marry a noble lady for the sake of his people.

Walter then sent to Bologna, asking the husband of the countess to bring home his son and daughter publicly and with great honour. No one was to know whose children they were ; and if any questions were asked, the earl had been instructed to say that the young maiden was about to be married to the marquis.

The cruel husband now told his patient wife of his determination. "My lord," replied Griselda, "I always knew myself to be quite unworthy of the honour you bestowed on me ; I am not worthy even to be your servant."

Then, weeping and lamenting, the ladies divested her of her jewels and rich clothing ; and clad in one garment, and with bare head and feet, she quitted the castle, neither shedding a tear nor giving vent to any expression of reproach against her husband.

It was now publicly announced that a great earl was travelling from Bologna with the noble maiden destined to be Lord Walter's new bride ; and when preparations for their entertainment were beginning, Griselda was summoned to appear before her husband.

"I desire my destined wife to be received here with all possible honour," he said ; "and as none of my servants can arrange the rooms so well to my taste as you can, I wish you to take the oversight of everything."

Certainly this was a wonderful woman, for she answered that she would thankfully and gladly obey her lord in this. Forthwith she began to deck the house, and to set the tables, and to make the beds, nor was one of the chambermaids so active as their former mistress.

When the earl and the two children reached the house, the people of the whole territory were ready to greet them with reverence ; and many a voice was heard praising the beauty of the maiden, and approving the conduct of the marquis in wedding her and dismissing his low-born wife.

When the guests were about to take their seats at the supper-table, the marquis called to Griselda, as if for the amusement of the rest, "What think

you of my bride? Is she not fair in your eyes?"

"In truth, my lord, I never saw a more beautiful maiden; and may you spend many prosperous years in her company," was the reply. "But I pray you, noble lord, not to put hard trials on her; for she is young and gently nurtured, nor could she bear adversity as one who had been used to poverty and care."

"It is enough, Griselda," cried Walter, now really satisfied that she was perfect in virtue. "Have no more fear; be happy at last, for I have tempted you as never surely was woman tempted before. In wealth and in poverty I have proved your faith, your steadfastness, your love."

Poor Griselda scarcely seemed to understand his words. One thing, however, she had heard—that these were her two long-absent children; and sinking on the floor, she called them to her, and kissed and fondled them, while heavy tears fell from her eyes on their fresh young faces.

But even her brave spirit had been tried beyond its power of endurance, and, with her arms still around her children, she swooned away; nor was it very quickly that those who gathered around succeeded in restoring her to consciousness.

When at last she rose up and heard her husband's voice assuring her of his devotion, all her troubles seemed thrown off, and she departed to the chamber which had formerly been her own, that the ladies might dress her suitably.

In cloth of gold and many jewels, and crowned



The Last Supper "One of you shall betray Me."
(from a print after the fresco by Leonardo da Vinci.)

with a diadem of precious stones, Griselda returned to the hall, where never before had been such festivities as they kept up till night—no, not even on the day of her marriage.

* * * * *

The tale was a famous one of the Middle Ages. Chaucer, having a sense of humour, cannot help adding his own comment at the end. "One word more I would add," he makes the "Clerk" say. "It would be hard nowadays to find in any town a Griselda; and I would counsel no wedded man to try the virtue of a wife as hers was tried, in the hope of finding a like submission, for certainly he would fail."



XVI.

SOME ITALIAN PAINTERS.

HERE is a pretty story which ought to be true.

One day the famous Italian painter Cimabue, who lived in the latter half of the thirteenth century, was taking a walk in the fields outside the city of Florence. On his way he fell in with a small boy whose duty it was to take care of a flock of goats, but who was deeply engrossed in making rough drawings with a piece of hard stone upon the face of a sandstone rock.

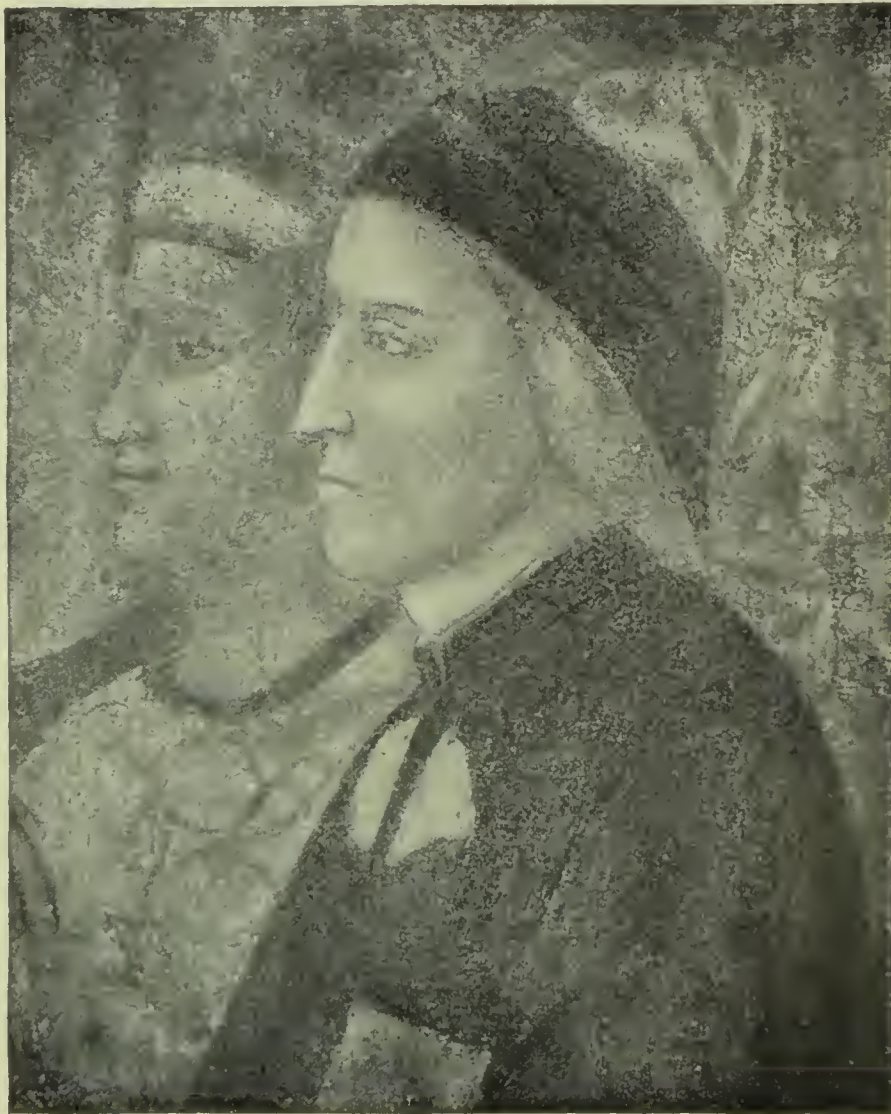
The painter drew near to the shepherd-artist, and his practised eye told him at once that the boy possessed natural skill of no mean order. He stopped, and asked the young goatherd whether he would like to learn to draw. The boy's eyes shone with pleasure, and his answer scarcely needed expression in words. Before long he became the master's favourite pupil, and in time rose to be a greater artist than his teacher.

Whether the introduction of Giotto—for that was the boy's name—and Cimabue really took place in this manner we cannot tell with certainty; but it is quite true that Giotto, who had been apprenticed to a wool stapler, learnt his art in the studio of Cimabue. It was not long before he showed his powers as a painter, and the men of Florence and

Assisi employed him in the decoration of the walls of their churches.

He did not paint on canvas, as most of our artists do at the present day, but executed those wall paintings which are known as frescoes. The work was done upon freshly-laid plaster, a small portion at a time. Sufficient plaster for a day's work was laid upon the wall, and the outline of the drawing was traced upon it, while it was soft, with a blunt-pointed iron known as a stylus. The artist then painted in the figures; and he had to work quickly and exactly, for mistakes could not easily be remedied, and fresh colours could not be added after the plaster had become dry and hard. He had, moreover, to be very careful in his choice of pigments because of the lime in the plaster, which acted upon certain colours in such a way that they faded very quickly.

When he was a young man Giotto paid his first visit to Rome, where he made the acquaintance of the poet Dante. Returning to Florence, he set to work on a series of frescoes on the walls of a Florentine palace, and produced some of the noblest paintings of this kind that the world has ever seen. Not long after his death the wall was whitewashed! And it is not very long ago since the master's work was once more revealed, mutilated and defaced, of course, but still exhibiting that command of his art which distinguished the renowned artist. Among the paintings in this chapel was a portrait of Dante, a reproduction of which is shown on page 130.



THE PORTRAIT OF DANTE.

(From the fresco said to be the work of Giotto. Alinari, Photo.)

One day a messenger came from the Pope, who was then at Avignon, to the studio of Giotto. His Holiness wished to obtain the services of the greatest artists of the day, for he had on hand a great scheme of wall decoration in his own chapel and elsewhere. Would Giotto be good enough to send to him some specimens of his work? "Certainly," was the prompt answer, and the painter, taking a piece of parchment, deftly and quickly painted upon it a perfect circle. "Take that to your master," he said to the messenger. "And nothing else?" asked the astonished envoy. "That is enough for a wise man," was the smiling reply. And it was. But the Pope died before he could employ Giotto on the work which he had planned.

The painter went on from strength to strength, and produced glorious work in Padua, Florence, Rome, and Naples. Others of his frescoes were also covered with whitewash after his death, and only discovered many centuries later, to delight the eyes of all lovers of the beautiful. Giotto was an architect, too, and designed the beautiful Campanile, or bell-tower, in Florence. Of all the Italian masters, he was undoubtedly one of the greatest.

Another famous painter of this art-loving country was Leonardo da Vinci, who lived rather more than a century after the time of Giotto, and distinguished himself as painter, sculptor, architect, musician, poet, engineer, mathematician, and philosopher. He was also a native of Florence, and studied his

art in that famous city, but he spent a great part of his life in Rome and Milan.

One of his best known works we have reproduced on page 128. Our picture does not show the original colours of the famous painting, for the work was done as a fresco in Milan, and is now practically indistinguishable owing to the artist's experiments with colours which did not last.

The picture represents the incident described in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter xxvi. :—

“Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.”

It is interesting to study the varied expressions and gestures of the disciples as the question passes along the table, “Lord, is it I?” Nor will it be difficult to distinguish the disciple who finally betrayed his Master and then in his bitter remorse “went out and hanged himself.”

Da Vinci's great rival was the famous painter known as Michael Angelo, who spent eight years on his fresco of the “Last Judgment” in the Sistine Chapel at Rome. He was a man of fiery energy, who loved deeply and hated fiercely, and some of his best work as painter and sculptor was done to show his taunting enemies how greatly he could excel. One of his first commissions was

given to him by the leading men of Florence, who carelessly bade him try his hand on a huge block of marble which had been hacked and hewn by another sculptor and then forsaken in despair.

Michael Angelo accepted the commission, and, making his way to his studio, quickly modelled a small standing figure of David, the shepherd boy of Israel, with his sling over his shoulder. He then ordered workmen to build a casing of wood for the block of marble, so that no one should see him at work. For three years he laboured on the difficult task, and at last produced the famous statue "David," which won for him European renown as a sculptor, and is to-day one of the wonders of the world of art.

This famous artist lived to a great age, and crowded into his long life enough variety and change to furnish the career of a company of men of the first rank in art. He was painter and sculptor, as we have seen; but he was also a capable engineer, at one time holding the office of inspector of fortifications in the city of Florence, at another personally superintending the excavation of the marble blocks which were so much in demand in his day for building and decoration. A certain Pope, Julius II., one day gave him the work of decorating the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, in the hope, scarcely concealed, that such a task would be beyond the powers of the artist. The implied insult acted as an incentive on the mind and hand of the master, who produced, after much labour, such paintings and designs as had



THE MADONNA.

(From the painting by Raphael.)

never been seen before and have never been surpassed since his day.

In the picture gallery at Dresden there is a painting known as the "Sistine Madonna," the handiwork of an artist who worked side by side

with Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel, the Pope's private place of worship in the Vatican at Rome. This painter was named Raphael, and he now ranks as one of the greatest artists of the world.

We see in the centre of the picture the Madonna (our Lady), as the Italians call the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. The story of the painting is that one of the popes, Sixtus the Fourth, once had a vision in which he saw the Virgin Mary in the sky with the infant Jesus in her arms, while near her stood a good woman known as Saint Barbara. Raphael tried to paint this vision, and he has put the Pope also into his picture.

The curtains have been drawn back, and in the original painting we see the sky full of people. Towards us, upon the clouds, comes the Virgin Mary, carrying Jesus in her arms. As she comes between St. Barbara and the Pope the wind appears to blow her robes backwards. At the bottom of the picture are two little angels or cherubs, probably portraits of two Italian boys of the artist's time, and merry little boys too.

The picture is no longer in Italy, but, as we have said, in Dresden, and many people think it is the most beautiful picture in the world. It is said that many spectators have shed tears before this painting; and we have heard of old women coming to see it, and crying, and then tottering away again to their daily work with a new light in their faces and new hope in their hearts.

The picture was kept in Italy for nearly four

hundred years, when it was bought by the Elector of Saxony for 60,000 florins. It was received in Dresden with great acclamation, and the best place in the palace was made ready for it. To-day it would be worth, not 60,000 florins, but more than that number of pounds sterling.

Raphael was the son of an artist, and his mother died when he was eight years of age. Then his father died too, and the young artist went to have lessons from a painter named Perugino, who saw at once that Raphael would become a great artist, for he said, "Let him be my pupil; he will soon become my master."

In time Raphael did become a greater painter than his teacher, and when he died in Rome his body lay in state, and crowds came to look upon the handsome face that they would see no more. On the day of the funeral it seemed as though all the people in Rome followed his body to the tomb, and the artist's last picture, which shows Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, was carried in the procession.

XVII.

LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT.

WE have seen how the merchants of Florence spent a great deal of the money they made in trade—namely, in the erection of beautiful public buildings and in the encouragement of poets, writers, artists, and sculptors. This was a very worthy manner of using their wealth, and among the merchant princes none were more generous than the family of the Medici.

The head of this family in the latter part of the fifteenth century was a certain Lorenzo, who, because of his splendid manner of living, was surnamed “the Magnificent.” He was so powerful among the members of the council which ruled Florence as a kind of republic, that he may be truly said to have been the uncrowned king of the city state. Fortunately for Florence, he ruled in many ways for the good of her people.

He had a great desire to educate the young Florentines, but one of the difficulties in the way was the lack of books and teachers. We have seen how Petrarch wandered from castle to castle in search of manuscripts, and how he made known to his generation the substance of many of the writings of ancient Greece and Rome. But the great storehouse of these manuscripts was the Greek city of

Constantinople, where the teachers also lived, who could, if they wished, give to the people of Western Europe the knowledge and enlightenment for which they longed.

Now when Lorenzo the Magnificent was a boy of six, an event took place which was destined to be of great help to him in his work. For a long time the Turks of Central Asia, who were Mohammedans, had been threatening Constantinople ; and in 1453 they were able to capture the city, and turned the beautiful Christian church of St. Sophia into a Mohammedan mosque. The learned men of the place made their escape in great numbers, carrying their precious manuscripts with them ; and many of them found their way to the cities of Western Europe, where they were gladly received. Many went to Italy, some of them to Florence, where they were enlisted by Lorenzo in working out his plans for the enlightenment of his people.

Before long, many hundreds of copyists were engaged in making duplicates of the manuscripts which contained the immortal writings of Homer, Plato, and other great writers of Greece. Others made copies of the Gospels from the Greek manuscripts, and spent many hours in ornamenting and illuminating the pages of their books. Most of the copying work was done in the monasteries, and in one of his poems Longfellow gives us a charming picture of the devotion of a monk to his work. We can see in the following lines how the man's whole heart is set upon the perfection of his work :—

“It is growing dark! Yet one line more,
 And then my work for the day is o’er.
 I come again to the name of the Lord!
 Ere I that awful name record,
 That is spoken so lightly among men,
 Let pause awhile and wash my pen;
 Pure from blemish and blot must it be
 When it writes that word of mystery!

“This is well written, though I say it!
 I should not be afraid to display it,
 In open day, on the self-same shelf
 With the writings of St. Theda herself,
 Or of Theodosius, who of old
 Wrote the Gospels in letters of gold!
 That goodly folio standing yonder
 Without a single blot or blunder,
 Would not bear away the palm from mine,
 If we should compare them line for line.

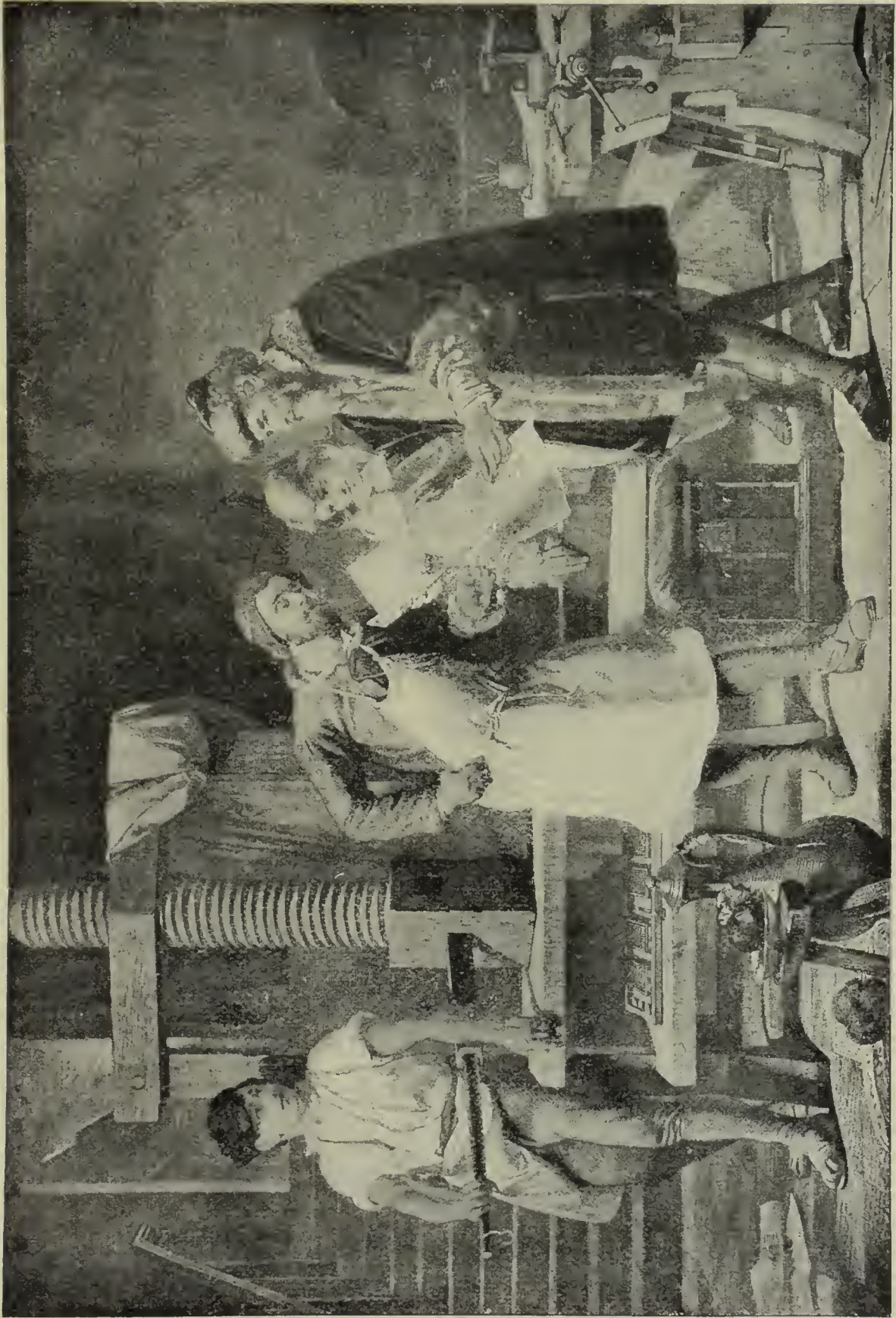
“There, now, is an initial letter;
 Saint Ulric himself never made a better!
 Finished down to the leaf of the snail,
 Down to the eyes of the peacock’s tail!
 And now, as I turn the volume over,
 And see what lies between cover and
 cover,
 What treasures of heart these pages hold,
 All ablaze with crimson and gold.
 God forgive me! I seem to feel
 A certain satisfaction steal
 Into my heart, and into my brain,

As if my talent had not lain
 Wrapped in a napkin, and all in vain.

“How sweet the air is! how fair the scene!
 I wish I had as lovely a green
 To paint my landscapes and my leaves!
 How the swallows twitter under the eaves!
 There, now, there is one in her nest;
 I can just catch a glimpse of her head and breast,
 And will sketch her thus in her quiet nook,
 For the margin of my Gospel Book.

“I can see no more! Through the valley yonder
 A shower is passing; I hear the thunder
 Mutter its curses in the air—
 The devil's own and only prayer!
 The dusty road is brown with rain;
 And, speeding on with might and main,
 Hitherward rides a gallant train.
 They do not parley, they cannot wait.
 What a fair lady! And beside her
 What a handsome, graceful, noble rider!
 Now she gives him her hand to alight.
 They will beg shelter for the night.
 I will go down to the corridor
 To try to see that face once more;
 It will do for the face of some beautiful saint,
 Or for one of the Maries I shall paint.”

It seems a pity that such devotion should have
 been spoilt by a mechanical invention. But the
 copyists could not work quickly enough to supply



GUTENBERG AND HIS PRESS.
(From the picture by E. Hillemacher.)

the demand, and men cast about for a more expeditious method of multiplying copies of literary works. Just before the birth of Lorenzo the Magnificent the first printing-press was started in Germany, and three years after his birth the first book printed in Florence had made its appearance. Thus the fall of Constantinople and the invention of printing came together, as it were, to fulfil one of the desires of the great Florentine Lorenzo. He established in his city a high school, which soon won European fame; and before long the art of printing had advanced so rapidly that copies of Homer, Virgil, Horace, and Plato could be bought at a comparatively modest price by the pupils of his school.

It is not quite certain to whom belongs the credit of inventing the method of printing by using movable type. What is called block printing had been known and practised for a long time. A sentence was written backwards on a block of hard wood, and the rest of the surface was cut away, leaving the words in relief. This could then be smeared with ink and an impression made on parchment. But this method was naturally slow and expensive.

The story goes that a certain Laurence Coster, a native of Haarlem in Holland, was in the habit of amusing his grandchildren by cutting letters out of beech bark. One day, when he wrapped up some of these letters in a piece of parchment, he noticed that they left an impression upon it. This supplied the great idea, and before long he set up



Columbus landing in the New World.

(From the picture by Puebla.)

a simple printing-press in which a separate wooden block was used for each letter.

Five years later we hear of a certain John Gutenberg of the German city of Mainz, who was engaged in printing a large Latin Bible from movable type. Whether he learned his art from Coster, or conceived the same idea at the same time, seems to be unknown. But the fact remains that Gutenberg took a great step forward by making his type, not of wood, but of metal, and thus ranks as one of the world's first printers.

The first man to apply the new art in England was William Caxton, who had learned it at Cologne, and came home again to set up the wonderful press in the Almonry at Westminster, where he was visited by no less a person than Edward the Fourth. He used what is known as the Black Letter. Here is a specimen of it.

For I Wote Wel. of What somezeit condicion Women ben in
Greece. the Women of this contree ben right good, Wyse, play
fant, humble, discrete, schæ, chaste, obedient to their husbon;
dis, trewe, secrete, stedfast, ever & p/er neuer ydle. Attempte
rat in speking, and vertuous in alle their werkis. or atte

To return for a moment to Lorenzo the Magnificent. Though he worked so well for the advancement of learning, his rule was not a good thing for the Florentines, who, under his influence, lost that love of liberty which had always distinguished them. They became corrupt, and lived only for

the enjoyment of art and pleasure. They learnt to despise goodness and worship the intellect, giving to the works of the ancient writers that reverence and worship which they ought to have reserved for the Maker of all things. This great error was pointed out to them very forcibly by an earnest preacher, of whom we shall read in our next chapter.

Meanwhile we must not forget the Medici family, for they play a prominent part in European history.

The time of Lorenzo the Magnificent was a period of great awakening in every department of European life. He was contemporary with the great Christopher Columbus, of whom we shall read in a later chapter of this book ; and while he was making every effort to breathe new life into the Old World, the great sailor was "daring the sea of darkness" in a dauntless spirit of adventure, as we shall see.



XVIII.

CHAMPIONS OF THE FAITH.

WE have seen how Lorenzo the Magnificent of Florence encouraged the learned men and the artists of his time, and did a great deal towards helping the advance of education in Florence. We have also seen that the increase of knowledge did not lead to an increase of goodness, and that in Florence, as in other Italian cities, most of the people gave themselves over to a life of pleasure and dissipation. But in time there arose a teacher who made a heroic effort to rouse the Florentines to higher ideals of life.

His name was Girolamo Savonarola, and he was born at Ferrara in the middle of the fifteenth century. His boyhood and youth were sad and solitary, and when he grew to manhood he became a Dominican friar and entered the convent of San Marco at Florence. There he began to preach in the chapel of the convent, and drew such large congregations that he soon left this small building and continued his work in the duomo or cathedral of the city.

He was a bold man, for he spoke strongly against the manner in which the people of Florence were allowing their liberties to be taken from them by the Medici family, caring nothing for the fact

that it would be an easy matter for Lorenzo to have him secretly assassinated. He denounced the people for their love of pleasure and their wickedness; told them that their worship of knowledge was by no means to their credit when they despised goodness and purity of life; and he openly said that destruction was coming upon the city at no distant date.

"Bring out," he cried passionately on one occasion, "your fine fabrics, your tapestries, your silken garments, your pictures, books, and sculptures, and offer them as a burnt-offering to the Lord of Hosts. It may be that even yet such a sacrifice will avert the destruction of the city." So great was the preacher's power over some of his hearers that this strange and extravagant order was literally obeyed, and bonfires were made in the streets of books, pictures, manuscripts, and clothing of great value.

Lorenzo showed his better nature by his treatment of the man who dared to tell him to his face that he was a tyrant and the real enemy of his people. At first he regarded Savonarola with amused contempt, but when he fell ill and came to lie upon his deathbed, he sent for the fearless preacher and humbly asked for his absolution. "God requires of you three things," said the priest, "before He can grant you pardon. You must profess your humble faith in Him; you must return to their rightful owners all those things of which you have unjustly possessed yourself; and you must give back to the Florentines

the freedom which you have filched from them.” “The first and the second of these things I can do,” replied the weary man; “the third command it is beyond my power to obey.”

Lorenzo passed away, leaving the government of the city in the hands of his son Piero. Then there came upon Florence the disaster which Savonarola, who was now prior of San Marco, had foretold. King Charles the Eighth of France marched into Italy at the head of a great army, and Piero de Medici tamely submitted to him without making an effort to strike a single blow in defence of the city. This roused the citizens to action, and they drove out their ruler, who took refuge in Rome. The only man then capable of taking the government in hand was Savonarola himself, who soon became the ruler of Florence, and set about the reforms of which he had preached so earnestly.

All faction disputes were hushed. The real ruler of Florence, Savonarola reminded the people, was not himself, but his heavenly Master, and it was His law which was now to be the rule of their daily life. The ladies and young gallants cast aside their gay clothing and costly jewellery, and appeared in the streets in plain, sober garb. The carnivals and holiday feasts were discontinued, and religious processions became frequent. All gaiety was banished, and Florence passed through a time which can best be compared to that of the Puritans in our own history.

But this state of affairs did not last. The exiled

Piero de Medici was able to persuade the Pope to excommunicate Savonarola, and this brought the latter into discredit with the Florentines, who had regarded him as a pillar of the Church. Before long there was a party in Florence itself bitterly opposed to him. An attack was made upon the convent, and Savonarola and his friends were taken and imprisoned. After repeated examinations, accompanied by torture, they were hanged, and their bodies publicly burned. So ended the career of one of the most remarkable men in European history.

In the year of Savonarola's death there was studying at a school in Magdeburg a youth of fifteen, who was destined to awaken Central Europe to a fervour of religious reformation which in time surpassed that aroused in Italy by the prior of San Marco. This was Martin Luther, the son of a poor miner of Eisleben, in Saxony, who was, says Carlyle, "born poor and brought up poor—one of the poorest of men. He had to beg, as the school-children of those times did, singing for alms and bread from door to door."

In spite of his great poverty, however, Martin Luther was able to obtain a university education, and intended to become a lawyer. One day he was walking along a country road with a friend named Alexis, when a violent thunderstorm came on and his companion was struck dead at his side. This startling event made a great impression on Luther, who took the occurrence as a sign from heaven that he was to dedicate himself to a

religious life. Shortly afterwards he entered a monastery, and later became a priest and a professor in the University of Wittenberg. He was a man of independent spirit, and his lectures soon began to attract attention, for he gave expression to opinions which he knew would not be regarded with favour by his religious superiors.

He was indeed in great personal danger, for men had been burnt as heretics for holding such beliefs as he avowed. This, however, did not deter him. One day he went down to the church in his university town, and fastened upon the door a paper containing a declaration of his beliefs. This was promptly taken down and publicly burnt. In other towns his writings were also burnt, and a bull of excommunication was issued against him by the Pope. Luther burnt this in its turn, and went on bravely with his work.

He was called to Worms to meet the Diet, or Council of the Empire, and to defend himself against the charges which had been brought against him. "The Diet of Worms," says the historian Carlyle, "and Luther's appearance there, may be considered as the greatest scene in modern European history. After much disputation it had come to this. The young emperor, Charles the Fifth, with all the princes of Germany, are assembled there; Luther is to appear and answer for himself whether he will recant or not. The world's pomp and power sit there on this hand; on the other stands up one man, the poor miner, Hans Luther's son. Friends had advised him

not to go; he would not be advised. A large company of friends rode out to meet him with still more earnest warnings; he answered, 'Were there as many devils in Worms as there are roof tiles, I would on.'"

At the Diet he made a fearless defence of his opinions, ending with the bold words: "Let me then be refuted and convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures, or by the clearest arguments, otherwise I cannot and will not recant; for it is neither safe nor wise to act against conscience. Here I take my stand; I can do no otherwise, so help me God! Amen!"

He left the Diet a conqueror, but his friends feared for his life. One of them, the Elector of Saxony, had him conveyed secretly and in disguise to his castle at Wartburg. Here Luther remained for ten months, spending his time in laborious study and in carrying on the great controversy by means of his pen. He likened himself to St. John, saying that his enforced seclusion was like that of the great apostle in the isle of Patmos, where he tells us he saw the heavenly visions that are described in the Book of Revelation.

At the end of this period of retirement Luther returned to Wittenberg, where he published a sharp reply to King Henry the Eighth of England, who had written a book against him, and who had as a consequence received from the Pope that title of Defender of the Faith which is still held by our sovereigns. Then came the publication of Luther's translation of the New Testament into

German, a work which had occupied him for a long time. This was a really important event in the history of Germany. For the Lutheran Testament not only helped greatly in the work to which the reformer had set his hand; it also rendered service to the German language similar to that rendered to English by Chaucer when he wrote his "Canterbury Tales" in our mother-tongue.

Before the time of the appearance of Luther's Testament there was no standard German. Each district spoke its own dialect, and the people of one part of the country found it hard to understand the speech of those of another district. But when the New Testament was printed in Germany and was circulated, as it soon came to be, in all parts of the country, it gave the people of the various kingdoms, dukedoms, and principalities a common language, and forged a new bond of union among them.

Luther was originally, as we have seen, a priest of the Catholic Church, and as such was not allowed to marry. He had, however, completely separated himself from that church; and he married Catherine de Bora, who had been a nun. The couple had a very happy home life. Luther took great delight in music, especially choral music, and, like St. Francis of Assisi, was a great lover of the birds. Here is a portion of one of the reformer's private letters, in which he makes delightful reference to his feathered friends:—

"Just under our window there is a grove like

a little forest, where the choughs and crows have convened a diet, and there is such a riding hither and thither, such an incessant tumult day and night, as if they were all merry and mad with drinking. Young and old chatter together, until I wonder how their breath can hold out so long. I should like to know if any of those nobles and cavaliers are with you; it seems to me they must be gathered here out of the whole world.

"I have not yet seen their emperor; but their great people are always strutting and prancing before our eyes, not, indeed, in costly robes, but all simply clad in one uniform—all alike black, all alike gray-eyed, and all singing one song, only with the most amusing varieties between young and old and great and small.

"They are not careful to have a great palace and hall of assembly, for their hall is vaulted with the beautiful broad sky; their floor is the field, strewn with fair green branches; and their walls reach as far as the ends of the world. Neither do they require steeds and armour; they have feathered wheels with which they fly from shot and danger. They are, doubtless, great and mighty lords, but what they are debating I do not yet know.

"As far, however, as I understand through an interpreter, they are planning a great foray and campaign against the wheat, barley, oats, and all kinds of grain, and many a knight will win his spurs in this war, and many a brave deed will be done.

“Thus we sit here in our diet, and hear and listen with great delight, and learn how the princes and lords, with all the other estates of the empire, sing and live so merrily. But our especial pleasure is to see how cavalierly they pace about, whet their beaks, and furbish their armour, that they may win glory and victory from wheat and oats. We wish them health and wealth.

“To-day we have heard the first nightingale; for they would not trust April. We have had delightful weather here—no rain, except a little yesterday. With you, perhaps, it is otherwise. Herewith I commend you to God.”

Luther died in 1546, just a year before the accession of our King Edward the Sixth. This monarch may be said to have been numbered among the followers of the great reformer, who, because of their “protests” against the claims and beliefs of the church, won for themselves the name of Protestants.



XIX.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, THE MAN WHO DARED THE "SEA OF DARK- NESS."

ONE day in the autumn of the year 1486 a wandering stranger, holding a little boy by the hand, knocked at the gate of a monastery outside the Spanish port of Palos. The door was instantly opened by the monk who acted as porter. "What is your will, brother?" he asked gently. "Give bread to me and my child," said the traveller, "in the name of your Master." "In that great name," the monk said reverently, "enter and partake of our hospitality."

The man and the boy passed through the gateway, and were soon seated in the refectory, where food was at once placed before them. As they satisfied their evident hunger one of the brothers engaged the traveller in conversation, and at once discovered that he was no ordinary man. He spoke much of books, manuscripts, and charts, and revealed a knowledge of astronomy and navigation which astonished his hearer. "Men will tell you," he said earnestly, "that beyond the islands of the Azores there lies only what they call the Sea of Darkness. But I *know* that across that

misnamed sea there lie the lands whence come the spices."

"Nay," said the wondering monk, "the lands of Eastern Ind are to be reached only by the path trodden by the great Alexander, who led his armies thither from Macedonia. But wait until I bring the prior and his friend, the physician of Palos, who is learned in these matters."

Before long the little circle of listeners was enlarged, and soon all were absorbed in the stranger's story. "I am Christopher Columbus," he said in answer to a direct question from the prior, "and I am a native of the city of Genoa. As a child I loved the sea and the ships, and longed to venture out upon the deep.

"My youth was spent in the University of Pavia, where I took keen delight in the maps and charts, and studied the heavenly bodies which guide the seaman upon his way. I have since travelled across the Mediterranean, and have visited England, that far corner of the west. On one voyage our vessel was wrecked off the coast of Portugal, and I narrowly escaped with my life.

"I married the daughter of a sea-captain who was the governor of one of the Madeira Islands, and this is my son," laying his hand tenderly upon the head of the boy, who sat near him. "Out there in the western limits of the land there is much speculation as to what lies far over in the unknown west.

"One day a sailor picked up a piece of carven wood, fashioned as no European could conceive



DEPARTURE OF COLUMBUS FOR THE DISCOVERY OF THE NEW WORLD.

(From the picture by A. Gisbert.)

or execute. Others have found on the shore pieces of jointed cane. Further, my wife's brother once saw on the beach the bodies of two men, broad-faced, and dark in colour, not at all like Christians. I became convinced that across that Sea of Darkness lies the land whence come the spices, and I determined to find it if I could.

"But I am a poor man, and men who listened to my story told me, with a laugh, that I was mad. In Genoa and in Lisbon I asked for a ship and crew, promising to bring to those who supplied them honour and wealth untold. But none would listen or help me. At last your own good Queen Isabella heard my story and spoke kindly to me. But her counsellors advised her to cast me out. I was not only a madman, they said, but a heretic. My story could only be true, said one, if the world were round, which was contrary to Holy Writ. The queen listened to them, and I am once more a beggar and a suppliant."

The little company of listeners was keenly interested, and one of the monks, who was the queen's confessor, set to work to enlist the help of his royal mistress and her husband, King Ferdinand, who was at that time engaged in the campaign in which he finally drove the Moors from Southern Spain. After a great deal of persuasion, the royal pair promised to supply Columbus with ships and men, and thus took a step which added undying lustre to their remarkable reign.

It was comparatively easy to find three ships for

the voyage, and they were named the *Santa Maria*, the *Pinta*, and the *Nina*; but it was not so easy to find sailors daring enough to venture upon a voyage across the Sea of Darkness. But at last a sufficient number was found, and at eight o'clock on the morning of August 3rd, in the year 1492, the sails of the little vessels were hoisted, and the expedition left the harbour of Palos.

On the third day of the voyage the *Pinta* lost her rudder, and the little fleet was forced to put in to the harbour of Teneriffe, where the damaged vessel was repaired. On they went for six weeks, during which time there was much grumbling and discontent among the sailors. "Are there no graves at home," they asked their patient commander, "that you bring us here to die?" It was with great difficulty that Columbus prevailed upon them to continue their work of navigating the ships.

At last they saw some birds, and now felt sure that land could not be very far distant. Then the *Pinta* fished up a piece of sugar-cane and a log of wood, and the *Nina* sighted a branch covered with fresh green leaves, and bearing flowers like the brier rose. Late one night Columbus saw a light far across the water, and in the early morning of the 12th of October the sailor on the look-out cried, "Land ahead." A few hours later they made ready to set out in the longboat and effect a landing.

Meanwhile the sailors had seen upon the shore figures of naked savages, and as Columbus neared

the beach a group of dark-skinned people could be seen eagerly watching him. In a short time he stepped ashore, carrying his sword in his right hand, and in his left the royal banner of Spain. Kneeling upon the earth, he solemnly gave thanks to God for His guidance and protection, and then took formal possession of the new-found land in the name of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain.

Meanwhile the natives gazed at the newcomers in wonder and amazement. Then seeing that no violence seemed to be intended, a few of them crept timidly forward and gently fingered the garments of the Spaniards, as if they were not quite certain whether the visitors were real. Columbus now directed his men to distribute among them the small presents which had been placed in the boat—glass beads, feathers, and pieces of gaily coloured cloth—and the natives received these with the utmost delight.

The island on which Columbus had landed was one of the Bahama group, though he thought at the time that he had reached one of the islands which lie to the south-east of Asia. He now set out to make further explorations, and discovered the island of Cuba, and later that which is now known as Haiti, where the *Santa Maria* went aground and became a wreck. With the two remaining vessels the explorer then set out for home, and on the 15th of March 1493 he dropped anchor in the port of Palos.

At once he made his way to the Spanish court,

which was then at Barcelona, where he was received with great honour. He told the king and the queen his wonderful story, and to prove its truth showed them curious plants and birds, and, still more interesting than these, nine of the West Indian natives, men and women, whom he had brought from the wonderful islands on the other side of the "Sea of Darkness."

Another expedition was now organized, and Columbus added to his discoveries Jamaica, Porto Rico, and several smaller islands. The explorer had heard on his first voyage that there was gold in Haiti, and now landed on that island a number of Spaniards, who made slaves of the natives in order to provide labour at the mines. This greatly angered the good Queen Isabella, who ordered that the slaves should be set free, and showed in a very plain manner that Columbus had lost her favour. This was the beginning of his downfall.

He made a third voyage, during which he discovered the island of Trinidad, and explored a small portion of the South American coast, but without knowing that he had really reached a new continent. Then he returned to Haiti, where he found the colonists greatly discontented, because their expectations with regard to the finding of gold in great abundance had not been fulfilled. They complained to the king that Columbus was managing the colony very badly, and a new governor was sent out, who dispatched Columbus in chains to Spain.



The Surrender of Granada to Ferdinand and Isabella.

The captain of the vessel in which he sailed wished to remove his fetters ; but Columbus would not allow him to do so. He wore them until the end of the voyage, and when the queen had heard his story, and taken him back once more into favour, he kept the chains as relics.

We must not forget that Columbus never dreamed that he had discovered a new continent. He supposed that Cuba, Jamaica, and the other islands which he visited were some of the group now known as the East Indies. For a long time this was the general belief too, and hence it is that Cuba and the neighbouring islands became known as the *West Indies*.

About this time the Pope divided between Spain and Portugal all the newly-discovered lands, and all that might afterwards be discovered. The dividing line was a meridian three hundred leagues to the west of the Azores. The share of Spain was all that lay west of this meridian, and that of Portugal all which lay east of it.

Spain was jealous of Portugal, and anxious to secure a part of that kingdom's share. Columbus suggested a way of doing this. He assured Ferdinand and Isabella that by sailing still farther to the westward, beyond the West Indies, it would be possible to reach some of the islands which might be claimed by Portugal ; and, of course, he was correct in this view.

He asked the sovereigns for a fleet with which to make the attempt, and in 1502, with four ships and a hundred and fifty men, he set sail from

Cadiz. On the voyage he landed on Jamaica and other islands, but although he was absent more than two years, he accomplished nothing of importance.

He returned to Spain in 1504, and died two years later. His body was buried at Valladolid, but was afterwards carried across the ocean and interred in the cathedral of Santo Domingo, on the island of Haiti. When that island was ceded by the Spaniards to France the remains of the great navigator were removed to Havana; and there they rested until the close of the war between the United States and Spain in 1898-9, when they were taken back to Spain.



XX.

CHARLES V., THE KING WHO GREW WEARY.

IN an earlier chapter we made mention of the capture of Granada from the Moors by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. It was the intention of these two sovereigns to drive the Mohammedan Moors completely out of the Spanish peninsula, and Granada was the last stronghold of the infidels.

Ferdinand did not try to take the city by storm, but set his men to work to raise another city outside its walls. When this had been done, in the wonderfully short space of eighty days, the king and queen took up their residence in the new city, and waited until, under pressure of famine and pestilence, the Moors opened their gates and submitted to the Christian monarchs.

Freed from the presence of the Mohammedans, and united at last under one sovereign, Spain made rapid strides towards a leading position among the countries of Europe. As we have seen, Ferdinand and Isabella, after some hesitation, gave help to Columbus, and reaped the fruits of that great man's faith and enterprise. Other Spanish navigators and adventurers soon followed in the path of Columbus. "I have opened the door for others to enter," he said, somewhat bitterly, near the end of his life.

And one of the first to pass through the open door was Ferdinand Cortes, who added the wealthy land of Mexico to the possessions of the Spanish crown.

One would have thought that these possessions were already wide enough. When King Ferdinand passed away he was succeeded by his grandson Charles, whose maternal grandfather, Maximilian, was the German ruler who held the title of Emperor—that is, head of the Holy Roman Empire. When this monarch also died, King Charles of Spain was elected emperor in his place, so that the greater part of Western Europe acknowledged him as its sovereign.

Just a few months before Charles was crowned as emperor in Aix-la-Chapelle, the old royal city of Charlemagne, news was received in Spain that the Spanish soldier and adventurer Cortes had succeeded in the conquest of the Aztec kingdom of Mexico, where, to his entire astonishment, he had found in existence a civilized people and a well-organized state.

Landing on the coast of Central America, he had at once come into conflict with the soldiers of Montezuma, the king or “emperor” of Mexico, and had, of course, defeated and overpowered them, filling them with “astonishment and terror, excited by the destructive effect of firearms and the monstrous apparition of men on horseback.” Cortes took a number of prisoners, and among them a young girl whom he named Marina. This maiden soon learnt the Spanish language, and be-

came invaluable to the leader of the Spaniards as guide and interpreter.

She told him that the king, Montezuma by name, lived about two hundred miles inland, in a wonderful city bearing a native name, which meant "the land where the god lives ;" that the monarch ruled the land from ocean to ocean, and that his slightest word was law. The Spaniards listened in wonder and amazement, and as they pushed onward into the country they found that Marina had not told them half the truth. Everywhere they discovered signs of civilized life, and a firm belief among the people that their king was "lord of the world," just as the head of the Holy Roman Empire claimed to be on the other side of the wide Atlantic.

Every town through which the Spaniards passed resounded with the praises of Montezuma. "Are you his subject?" Cortes asked of the governor of a certain city. "Who is there who is not the servant of the great king?" was the astonished reply. "Myself," said Cortes, somewhat curtly; but he was politely disbelieved, and passed onward, filled with determination to show the people of this new country that there could only be one "lord of the world."

In due time the strangers drew near to the capital, and Montezuma himself came out to meet them, borne in a decorated litter blazing with burnished gold. The king stepped to the ground and advanced to greet the Spaniards, while his subjects lowered their eyes in reverence as he

passed. Cortes dismounted from his horse and advanced, unawed and perfectly at his ease. He carried in his hand a chain of coloured crystal, which he placed round the monarch's neck, and would have embraced him if he had not been checked by two of the Aztec attendants, who were filled with horror at what they considered the profanation of the sacred person of their lord and master.

Cortes and his companions now passed onward into the city, and were filled with astonishment at its spacious squares and gardens, its fine houses and temples, and the dresses of the people who thronged its streets. The Spanish leader was received with lavish hospitality ; was given a fine residence within the city ; and soon became the close companion of Montezuma, who delighted to hear from him detailed accounts of the wonderful lands which lay on the other side of the ocean.

After a while it was secretly reported to Cortes that the party of Spaniards whom he had left in charge of his ships had come to blows with the Aztecs, and that some of them had been killed. It was also told him that the head of one of his own men had been shown in triumph in several of the cities which lay between Mexico and the sea. Cortes at once went with an armed guard to the palace of Montezuma, and having accused him of treachery, made him a prisoner in his room. In a very short time the Spaniards were masters of the city, and Montezuma was in chains, having upon this turn of events "sunk into a stupor, speaking

never a word." Cortes and his men were soon in possession of the treasury, and were feasting their eyes upon its contents. "The gold alone was sufficient to make three great heaps. It consisted partly of native grains, partly of bars; but the greatest portion was in utensils and various kinds of ornaments and curious toys, together with imitations of birds, insects, or flowers, executed with uncommon truth and delicacy. There were also quantities of collars, bracelets, fans, and other trinkets, in which the gold and feather work were richly powdered with pearls and precious stones."

After a time, however, Mexico revolted against the Spanish conqueror, and Montezuma, who seems to have deserved his defeat, ascending the central turret of his palace-prison, endeavoured to assure the people that the Spaniards were their friends. A shower of spears and stones was the answer, and the unhappy emperor fell to the ground. In a few days he died of his injuries, and before long the whole of Mexico was formally added to the wide dominions of Charles the Fifth, King of Spain and Emperor.

Yet—alas for human greatness and kingly gratitude!—when Cortes returned to Spain and appeared before the monarch, confident of receiving the highest possible honours in return for his services, Charles turned carelessly to one of his courtiers and languidly inquired, "Who is this man?" Cortes himself gave the reply: "He is one, sire, who has added more provinces to your dominions than any other governor has added

towns." Yet even this did not seem to impress the powerful king, to whom the acquisition of new provinces was almost an everyday matter.

The ambition of the emperor involved the whole of Europe in almost continual wars. We have not space to tell of his desperate struggles with his chief rival, Francis, King of France, nor of the wars which he fought in Italy, that beautiful country which has so often been the battle-ground of the nations of Europe. Let us for a few moments fix our attention upon two of his campaigns which were really of service to mankind.

The Turks, who held Constantinople, and who were under a very capable leader named Soliman, determined to take advantage of the fact that the nations of Europe were sadly weakened by incessant wars. So they mustered their forces and marched to the north-west, spoiling and plundering wherever they went. In due time they were on the march to Vienna, and were threatening Italy.

The whole of Western Europe was thrown into a panic of fear. The Pope, the spiritual head of the empire, issued an order that each day, as the church bell rang at noontide, the people should pray for deliverance from the infidel. The temporal head of the empire, Charles himself, summoned his forces and hurled them against the invaders, who were before long beaten back from the frontiers of Austria. Thus the great emperor saved Europe from a catastrophe which would have checked the advance of civilization for centuries.



A STIRRING EPISODE IN HUNGARIAN HISTORY—A SORTIE OF COUNT ZRINYI AGAINST THE TURKS IN 1566.

(From a print after Peter Kraft—Rischgitz Collection.)

Charles also dealt decisively and effectively with other foes who were troubling the countries of Southern Europe. These were the pirates of the Mediterranean, who made frequent descents upon the coasts of Italy and Spain, carrying off their prisoners as slaves to their strongholds on the North African coast. Charles fitted out a strong expedition, which followed up the sea-robbers into their own retreats and speedily made an end of them. The prisons of Tunis and Algeria were then thrown open, and some twenty thousand Christian slaves were set free.

These were deeds worthy of a Christian emperor. But in his plans for the invasion of France, and in his campaign against the followers of Luther in Germany, Charles spent much of the strength and treasure which might have been employed in the higher service of mankind. Suddenly, while his ambition seemed to be soaring higher than ever, he astonished his people by announcing that he meant to resign his crown, and spend the rest of his days in a monastery. This was no idle resolution, but was duly carried out.

The emperor summoned an assembly known as the States-General to meet him in Brussels, and before the assembled princes and nobles gathered from all parts of the empire he reviewed the events of his reign. As long as God had granted him health, he said, only his enemies had regretted that he was living and reigning. But now his strength was fast ebbing away—he was only fifty-five—and instead of a man with one foot in the

grave, he presented to them a sovereign in the prime of life and the vigour of health.

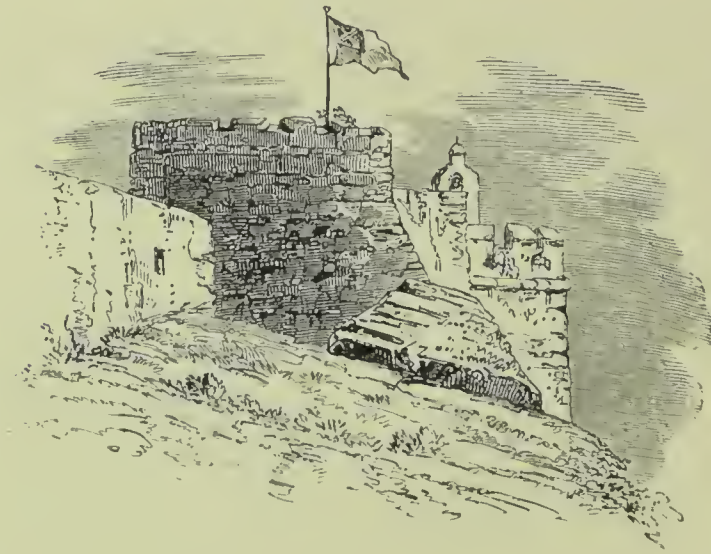
Then he turned towards his son Philip, who stood near him—the same prince who became the husband of Queen Mary of England of unhappy memory, and who afterwards sent the Armada to our shores. He exhorted him to conduct himself in the government of his dominions with a wise and affectionate regard to the best interests of his subjects. Lastly, he charged the assembled princes to render due obedience to the new monarch, and to keep the peace among themselves, ever working for the good of the Christian Church.

When the emperor concluded “sobs were heard throughout every portion of the hall, and tears poured profusely from every eye. The nobles on the platform and the burghers in the background were all melted with the same emotion. As for the emperor himself, he sank almost fainting upon his chair as he concluded his address. An ashy paleness overspread his countenance, and he wept like a child. Even the icy Philip was almost softened as he rose to perform his part of the ceremony. Dropping on his knees before his father’s feet, he reverently kissed his hand.

“Charles placed his hands solemnly upon his son’s head, made the sign of the cross, and blessed him in the name of the Holy Trinity. Then raising him in his arms he tenderly embraced him, saying as he did so, to the great potentates around him, that he felt a sincere compassion for the son on whose shoulders so heavy a weight had just

developed, and which only a lifelong labour would enable him to support."

Shortly afterwards the tired monarch entered a monastery, where he was known as the "Pilgrim of St. Just," and where he spent his days in meditation and prayer. He lived for only eighteen months after his abdication.



XXI.

THE BURGHERS OF LEYDEN.

WE have a tale to tell in this chapter which ought to be told, not in sober prose, but in stirring verse. But before we come to the details we must try to understand the historic situation.

Charles the Fifth left his hereditary possessions to his son Philip ; but the new King of Spain was not elected emperor. He was still, however, ruler of the Netherlands—that is, roughly, the territory now occupied by Holland and Belgium. In this corner of Europe the religious ideas of Luther and other Protestant reformers had taken firm root, and Charles the Fifth had tried to suppress them by force. He had been quite unsuccessful ; but his son, who hated Protestantism with the fierce hatred of a narrow mind, determined to stamp out the pestilent heresy in this northern part of his dominions.

The Protestant Dutch were mainly the burghers of the rich trading cities of the Netherlands, such as Ghent and Leyden ; but as time went on the fierce persecution to which these people were subjected won over the sympathies of many of the nobles, who, on their own part, were angry with the officers of King Philip because of their tyrannical methods of government. Among these was

a certain German prince known as William of Orange, and surnamed the Silent, who became the leader of the Protestant Dutch against the Spanish king.

In the year 1568—that is, about the middle of the reign of our Queen Elizabeth—the Netherlands rose in revolt against King Philip, and a Spanish army overran the country, prepared to dragoon the people into subjection. There were many brave struggles in various parts of the country, but that which took place at Leyden is typical of the rest. The Spaniards had invested the city and called upon the mayor or burgomaster to surrender.

The burgomaster refused again and again, and at last, acting under the advice of William of Orange, the people cut the dikes along the coast and allowed the waters of the North Sea to flood the fields near the city—land which had been reclaimed from the sea at great expense. Only one strong dike was left, which defended the city itself, and it was the hope of the people of Leyden that they would now be able to obtain relief by means of a small fleet of vessels under Admiral Boisot, which was cruising off the Dutch coast. Let us read from a famous book of history the story of the relief of Leyden.

“The inhabitants had gradually abandoned their hopes of relief, but they spurned another summons to surrender. Leyden was sublime in its despair. A few murmurs were, however, occasionally heard

at the steadfastness of the magistrates, and a dead body was placed at the door of the burgomaster, as a silent witness against his inflexibility. A party of the more faint-hearted even assailed the heroic man with threats and reproaches as he passed through the streets.

“A crowd had gathered around him as he reached a triangular place in the centre of the town, into which many of the principal streets emptied themselves, and upon one side of which stood the Church of Saint Pancras, with its high brick tower surmounted by two pointed turrets, and with two ancient lime trees at its entrance.

“There stood the burgomaster, a tall, haggard, imposing figure, with dark visage and a tranquil but commanding eye. He waved his broad-leaved felt hat for silence, and then exclaimed, in language which has been almost literally preserved: ‘What would ye, my friends? Why do ye murmur that we do not break our vows and surrender the city to the Spaniards?—a fate more horrible than the agony which she now endures. I tell you I have made an oath to hold the city, and may God give me strength to keep my oath! I can die but once—whether by your hands, the enemy’s, or by the hand of God. My own fate is indifferent to me. Not so that of the city entrusted to my care. I know that we shall starve if not soon relieved, but starvation is preferable to the dishonoured death which is the only alternative.

“‘Your menaces move me not; my life is at your disposal. Here is my sword. Plunge it

into my breast, and divide my flesh among you. Take my body to appease your hunger, but expect no surrender so long as I remain alive.'

"The words of the stout burgomaster inspired a new courage in the hearts of those who heard him, and a shout of applause and defiance arose from the famishing but enthusiastic crowd. They left the place, after exchanging new vows of fidelity with their magistrate, and again ascended tower and battlement to watch for the coming fleet.

"From the ramparts they hurled renewed defiance at the enemy. 'Ye call us rat-eaters and dog-eaters,' they cried, 'and it is true. So long, then, as ye hear dog bark or cat mew within the walls, ye may know that the city holds out. And when all has perished but ourselves, be sure that we will each devour our left arms, retaining our right to defend our women, our liberty, and our religion against the foreign tyrant.

"Should God in His wrath doom us to destruction, and deny us all relief, even then we will maintain ourselves for ever against your entrance. When the last hour has come, with our own hands we will set fire to the city, and perish—men, women, and children—together in the flames, rather than suffer our homes to be polluted and our liberties to be crushed.'

"Such words of defiance, thundered daily from the battlements, sufficiently informed the Spanish leader, Valdez, as to his chance of conquering the city, either by force or fraud; but at the same time he felt comparatively relieved by the inactivity of



The Night-Watch.

(From the painting by Rembrandt, in the Amsterdam Gallery.)

Boisot's fleet, which still lay stranded at North Aa. 'As well,' shouted the Spaniards derisively to the citizens—'as well can the Prince of Orange pluck stars from the sky as bring the ocean to the walls of Leyden for your relief.'

"On the 28th of September a dove flew into the city, bringing a letter from Admiral Boisot. In this dispatch the position of the fleet at North Aa was described in encouraging terms, and the inhabitants were assured that, in a very few days at furthest, the long-expected relief would enter their gates.

"The letter was read publicly upon the market-place, and the bells were rung for joy. Nevertheless, on the morrow the vanes pointed to the east; the waters, so far from rising, continued to sink, and Admiral Boisot was almost in despair. He wrote to the prince that if the spring tide, now to be expected, should not, together with a strong favourable wind, come immediately to their relief, it would be in vain to attempt anything further, and that the expedition would of necessity be abandoned.

"The tempest came to their relief. A violent gale, on the night of the 1st and 2nd of October, came storming from the north-west, shifting after a few hours full eight points, and then blowing still more violently from the south-west. The waters of the North Sea were piled in vast masses upon the southern coast of Holland, and then dashed furiously landward, the ocean rising over the earth, and sweeping with unrestrained power across the ruined dikes.

“In the course of twenty-four hours the fleet at North Aa, instead of nine inches, had more than two feet of water. No time was lost. The Kirkway, which had been broken through according to the prince’s instructions, was now completely overflowed, and the fleet sailed at midnight in the midst of the storm and darkness.

“A few sentinel vessels of the enemy challenged them as they steadily rowed towards Zoeterwoude. The answer was a flash from Boisot’s cannon, lighting up the black waste of waters. There was a fierce naval midnight battle—a strange spectacle among the branches of those quiet orchards, and with the chimney stalks of half-submerged farmhouses rising around the contending vessels. The neighbouring village of Zoeterwoude shook with the discharges of the Zealanders’ cannon, and the Spaniards assembled in that fortress knew that the rebel admiral was at last afloat and on his course. The enemy’s vessels were soon sunk, their crews hurled into the waves.

“On went the fleet, sweeping over the broad waters which lay between Zoeterwoude and Zwieten. As they approached some shallows which led into the great mere, the Zealanders dashed into the sea, and with sheer strength shouldered every vessel through.

“Two obstacles lay still in their path—the forts of Zoeterwoude and Lammen, distant from the city five hundred and two hundred yards respectively. Strong redoubts, both well supplied with troops and artillery, they were likely to give a

rough reception to the light flotilla. But the panic, which had hitherto driven their foes before the advancing patriots, had reached Zoeterwoude.

“Hardly was the fleet in sight when the Spaniards, in the early morning, poured out from the fortress and fled to the left, along a road which led, in a westerly direction, towards the Hague. Their narrow path was rapidly vanishing in the waves, and hundreds sank beneath the constantly deepening and treacherous flood.

“The wild Zealanders, too, sprang from their vessels upon the crumbling dike and drove their retreating foes into the sea. They hurled their harpoons at them, with an accuracy acquired in many a Polar chase. They plunged into the waves in the keen pursuit, attacking them with boat-hook and dagger. The numbers who thus fell beneath these corsairs, who neither gave nor took quarter, were never counted, but probably not less than a thousand perished. The rest effected their escape to the Hague.

“The first fortress was thus seized, dismantled, set on fire, and passed, and a few strokes of the oars brought the whole fleet close to Lammen. This last obstacle rose, formidable and frowning, directly across their path. Swarming as it was with soldiers and bristling with artillery, it seemed to defy the armada either to carry it by storm or to pass under its guns into the city. It appeared that the enterprise was, after all, to founder within sight of the long expecting and expected haven.

“Boisot anchored his fleet within a respectful



THE SYNDICS: REMBRANDT'S PICTURE OF A GROUP OF DUTCH MERCHANTS.

In the seventeenth century Holland rose to a position of great commercial supremacy, the domination of its enterprising merchants lasting for half a century and extending to every part of the world. The above picture, reproduced from Rembrandt's painting, shows us what type of men they were who made their country famous in the world of commerce.

distance, and spent what remained of the day in carefully reconnoitring the fort, which seemed only too strong. In conjunction with Leyderdorp, the headquarters of Valdez, a mile and a half distant on the right, and within a mile of the city, it seemed so insuperable an impediment that Boisot wrote in despondent tone to the Prince of Orange.

“He announced his intention of carrying the fort, if it were possible, on the following morning ; but if obliged to retreat, he observed, with something like despair, that there would be nothing for it but to wait for another gale of wind. If the waters should rise sufficiently to enable them to make a wide detour, it might be possible—if, in the meantime, Leyden did not starve or surrender—to enter its gates from the opposite side.

“Meantime the citizens had grown wild with expectation. A dove had been dispatched by Boisot, informing them of his precise position, and a number of citizens accompanied the burgomaster at nightfall toward the tower of Hengist.

“‘Yonder,’ cried the magistrate, stretching out his hand towards Lammen—‘yonder, behind that fort, are bread and meat, and brethren in thousands. Shall all this be destroyed by the Spanish guns, or shall we rush to the rescue of our friends?’

“‘We will tear the fortress to fragments with our teeth and nails,’ was the reply, ‘before the relief, so long expected, shall be wrested from us.’ It was resolved that a sortie, in conjunction with the operations of Boisot, should be made against Lammen with the earliest dawn.

“Night descended upon the scene—a pitch-dark night, full of anxiety to the Spaniards, to the armada, to Leyden. Strange sights and sounds occurred at different moments to bewilder the anxious sentinels. A long procession of lights issuing from the fort was seen to flit across the black face of the waters in the dead of night, and the whole of the city wall, between the Cow-gate and the Tower of Burgundy, fell with a loud crash. The horror-stricken citizens thought that the Spaniards were upon them at last; the Spaniards imagined the noise to indicate a desperate sortie of the citizens. Everything was vague and mysterious.

“Day dawned at length, after the feverish night, and the admiral prepared for the assault. Within the fortress reigned a deathlike stillness, which inspired a sickening suspicion. Had the city, indeed, been carried in the night? Had the massacre already commenced? Had all this labour been expended in vain.

“Suddenly a man was descried wading breast-high through the water from Lammen towards the fleet, while at the same time one solitary boy was seen to wave his cap from the summit of the fort.

“After a moment of doubt the happy mystery was solved. The Spaniards had fled, panic-struck, during the darkness. Their position would still have enabled them, with firmness, to frustrate the enterprise of the patriots; but the hand of God, which had sent the ocean and the tempest to the

deliverance of Leyden, had struck her enemies with terror likewise.

“The lights which had been seen moving during the night were the lanterns of the retreating Spaniards, and the boy who was now waving his triumphant signal from the battlements had alone witnessed the spectacle. So confident was he in the conclusion to which it led him that he had volunteered at daybreak to go thither all alone.

“The magistrates, fearing a trap, hesitated for a moment to believe the truth, which soon, however, became quite evident. Valdez, flying himself from Leyderdorp, had ordered Colonel Borgia to retire with all his troops from Lammen. Thus the Spaniards had retreated at the very moment that an accident had laid bare the whole side of the city for their entrance.

“The noise of the wall as it fell only inspired them with fresh alarm, for they believed that the citizens had sallied forth in the darkness to aid the advancing flood in the work of destruction. All obstacles being now removed, the fleet of Boisot swept by Lammen, and entered the city on the morning of the 3rd of October. Leyden was relieved.

“The quays were lined with the famishing population as the fleet rowed through the canals, every human being who could stand coming forth to greet the preservers of the city.

“Bread was thrown from every vessel among the crowd. The poor creatures, who for two

months had tasted no wholesome human food, and who had literally been living within the jaws of death, snatched eagerly the blessed gift, at last too liberally bestowed. Many choked themselves to death in the greediness with which they devoured their bread; others became ill with the effects of plenty thus suddenly succeeding starvation.

“The admiral, stepping ashore, was welcomed by the magistracy, and a solemn procession was immediately formed. Magistrates and citizens, wild Zealanders, burgher guards, sailors, soldiers, women, children — nearly every living person within the walls—all repaired without delay to the great church, stout Admiral Boisot leading the way. The starving and heroic city, which had been so firm in its resistance to an earthly king, now bent itself in humble gratitude before the King of kings.

“After prayers, the whole vast congregation joined in the thanksgiving hymn. Thousands of voices raised the song; but few were able to carry it to its conclusion, for the emotion, deepened by the music, became too full for utterance. The hymn was abruptly suspended, while the multitude wept like children.

“This scene of honest pathos terminated, the necessary measures for distributing the food and for relieving the sick were taken by the magistracy. A note dispatched to the Prince of Orange was received by him at two o’clock as he sat in church at Delft. It was of a somewhat different purport

from that of the letter which he had received early in the same day from Boisot—the letter in which the admiral had informed him that the success of the enterprise depended after all upon the desperate assault upon a nearly impregnable fort.

“The joy of the prince may be easily imagined, and so soon as the sermon was concluded he handed the letter just received to the minister, to be read to the congregation. Thus all participated in his joy, and united with him in thanksgiving.”



XXII.

HENRY OF NAVARRE, THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY.

WE have already read something of the Medici family, who made themselves the chief power in Florence during the fifteenth century. About seventy years after the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent a member of this family married King Henry the Second of France. Her name was Catherine, and she was a woman of great strength of character, who, as we shall see, did not allow anything to stand in her way in working out her plans.

In her time there was constant warfare in France between the Catholics and the Protestant Huguenots. On the whole, Catherine favoured the former, but she did not scruple to work against them when it suited her purpose, which was, briefly, to make the King of France the chief power in the land.

After the death of her husband her son Francis came to the throne, and was married to Mary Queen of Scots, who figures so tragically in the history of our Queen Elizabeth's reign. Francis died after a reign of twelve months, and was followed by his brother, Charles the Ninth, who was only ten at his accession, and was therefore completely under the rule of the queen-mother. This was Catherine's opportunity, and, as might have been expected, she took full advantage of it.

Her first move seemed to be entirely for the good of the country. She proposed that her daughter Margaret should be married to the young King Henry of Navarre, a small kingdom on the borders of France and Spain. Henry was a Protestant, and it was hoped that his marriage would bring to an end the unhappy religious disputes which had troubled France for so long a time. There were many people, however, who wisely shook their heads when they heard of the proposed marriage. "If this wedding comes off," said one nobleman, "the favours will be crimson."

The Princess Margaret herself objected to the husband chosen for her, and King Henry's mother, a noble princess, Jeanne d'Albret, came to Paris to confer with Catherine on the matter. Shortly after her arrival Queen Jeanne was seized with a sudden illness, of which she died, and it was whispered that her death had been brought about by the orders of the queen-mother. In spite of this the marriage took place in due course—not, however, within the Cathedral of Notre Dame, but in the courtyard without ; while the bride attended the ceremony only under severe threats on the part of the king, her brother, and her mother.

Among the guests at this strange wedding was the brave Huguenot, Admiral Coligny, who seems to have rejoiced too openly over an event which he thought promised peace for France. He had long conferences with the young king, and had hopes of obtaining such an influence over him that he would be able to persuade him to give relief



THE CORONATION OF MARIE DE MEDICI, SECOND WIFE OF HENRY IV. OF FRANCE.
(From the painting by Rubens in the Louvre.)

and protection to the Protestants of the country. This intimacy between Charles and the admiral roused the queen-mother to fury, and she secretly hired an assassin, to whom she promised a large reward if he would kill the admiral. Catherine was used to this method of removing an inconvenient adversary, and would think little of giving the order.

The would-be murderer, however, missed his aim, though he wounded the admiral in the shoulder. The attempt was a signal for the friends of the latter to rally round him, loud in their threats of revenge. Catherine took fright at this, and determined to organize a massacre of all the Huguenots in Paris. She went at once to her son, and told him that a plot had been discovered which had been planned by Coligny's party, and which had for its object the murder of the whole of the royal family. The only safe course to adopt, she said, was to authorize the massacre, which would be carried out by the Catholic party without delay.

The king, to his credit, shrank at first from giving his consent to the commission of one of the greatest crimes of history. He was a weak-minded young man, who spent most of his time in making wretched verses which his courtiers told him were worthy of an inspired poet. And it has been said that he was at last persuaded to sign the warrant by the intelligence whispered into his ear that Henry of Navarre had laughed at his poetry. However this may be, he did at last give the required consent. "You may do it," he cried,

“provided that you leave alive not one Huguenot to reproach me.”

The Catholic party agreed to wear white scarves on their left arms and white crosses on the front of their caps. At four o'clock on the morning following St. Bartholomew's Day the people of Paris were rudely awakened by the loud tolling of a bell. At once the church bells rang out in reply, and at this prearranged signal the massacre began. Soon the Catholics were forcing the doors and windows of the houses where the Huguenots were known to be, and, urged on by monks and priests, the murderers pursued their work with relentless fury. Admiral Coligny was discovered early in the day, and met his death like a brave man, saying, as he fell to the ground stabbed to the heart, “You only shorten my life a little.”

For three days the cry was heard throughout the city, “The Huguenots must die! The Huguenots must die!” and before the dreadful work was over some thousands of people—men, women, and children—had been ruthlessly slain. The fury spread to the provinces, and in many of the towns the Huguenots were slaughtered without mercy. So ended the attempt of the queen-mother to unite the Catholic and Protestant parties. They were now more widely sundered than ever, and their bitter struggle was once more renewed, Henry of Navarre becoming one of the leading champions of the Huguenots.

King Charles died two years after the massacre, and was succeeded by his brother, Henry the

Third, who reigned for fifteen years. The new king was a weak and foolish man, and a prominent nobleman, the Duke of Guise, formed a plot to kill him. The duke's plan was discovered, and he was slain. Then his friends took up arms ; but King Henry was helped by Henry of Navarre, and defeated the rebels. Shortly afterwards an assassin stabbed the king, who before his death begged his lords to acknowledge the King of Navarre as his successor.

But Henry had to fight for his new crown. One day a carrier pigeon came into his camp, bringing a slip of paper enclosed in a quill, and inscribed with the words, "Come, come, come !" The king knew at once that his friends in Paris were in need of him, and he hastened towards the city, which was in the hands of his enemies. On the way he fought and won the Battle of Ivry, which Lord Macaulay describes in his well-known poem, the lines of which are supposed to be spoken by a Huguenot warrior:—

"Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom
all glories are ;
And glory to our sovereign liege, King Henry
of Navarre !
Now let there be the merry sound of music and
of dance,
Through thy cornfields green, and sunny vines,
O pleasant land of France !
And thou, Rochelle, our own Rochelle, proud
city of the waters,
Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourn-
ing daughters.

As thou wert constant in our ills, be joyous in
our joy,
For cold, and stiff, and still are they who
wrought thy walls annoy.
Hurrah ! hurrah ! a single field hath turned the
chance of war.
Hurrah ! hurrah ! for Ivry, and Henry of
Navarre.

“ Oh ! how our hearts were beating when, at the
dawn of day,
We saw the army of the League drawn out in
long array,
With all its priest-led citizens and all its rebel peers,
And Appenzel's stout infantry and Egmont's
Flemish spears.
There rode the brood of false Lorraine, the
curses of our land ;
And dark Mayenne was in the midst, a truncheon
in his hand ;
And as we looked on them we thought of Seine's
impurpled flood,
And good Coligny's hoary hair, all dabbled with
his blood ;
And we cried unto the living God, who rules
the fate of war,
To fight for His own holy name and Henry of
Navarre.

“ Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from
wing to wing,
Down all our line, a deafening shout, ‘ God save
our lord the king ! ’

‘And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well
he may—
For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray—
Press where ye see my white plume shine
amidst the ranks of war,
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of
Navarre.’

“Hurrah! the foes are moving. Hark to the
mingled din
Of fife and steed, and trump and drum, and
roaring culverin.
The fiery duke is pricking fast across St. André’s
plain,
With all the hireling chivalry of Guelders and
Almayne.
Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen
of France,
Charge for the golden lilies—upon them with
the lance.
A thousand spurs are striking deep, a thousand
spears in rest,
A thousand knights are pressing close behind
the snow-white crest;
And in they burst, and on they rushed, while,
like a guiding star,
Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet
of Navarre.

“Now, God be praised, the day is ours! Mayenne
hath turned his rein;
D’Aumale hath cried for quarter; the Flemish
count is slain;

Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before
a Biscay gale ;
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and
flags, and cloven mail.
And then we thought on vengeance, and, all
along our van,
'Remember St. Bartholomew,' was passed from
man to man.
But out spoke gentle Henry, 'No Frenchman
is my foe ;
Down, down with every foreigner, but let your
brethren go.'
Oh, was there ever such a knight, in friendship
or in war,
As our sovereign lord, King Henry, the soldier
of Navarre ! ”

When this battle had been fought and won, King Henry laid siege to Paris. But before finally investing the city he wrote a letter to the governor in the following terms : “ I am anxious for peace. I love my city of Paris. She is my eldest daughter, and I wish to do her more favours than she asks.” This appeal was, however, in vain, and the siege went on.

Soon the Parisians began to feel the pangs of hunger, and King Henry allowed the women and children to leave the city. He even permitted a limited amount of food to be taken into the place, saying, as he gave leave for this to be done, “ I do not wish to be a king of the dead.”

Paris was just on the point of surrender when



Cardinal Richelieu in his State Barge.

(From the painting by Delacroix, in the Louvre Gallery.)

the Duke of Parma, one of the ablest generals in the service of Philip the Second of Spain, arrived before the city, and compelled King Henry to raise the siege. The monarch withdrew to consider his position, and at last came to the conclusion that he could only bring peace to his troubled country by becoming a Catholic. So he went one morning, dressed completely in white satin, to the doorway of the Church of St. Denis, near Paris. He was met by the archbishop and a body of priests.

"Who are you?" asked the archbishop.

"The king," replied Henry.

"What is your desire?" was the next inquiry.

"To be received into the Church," answered the king, falling upon his knees. So he was formally accepted, and before long was riding into his capital city at the head of his troops, amid the joyful cries of the Parisians.

Though he had become a Catholic, one of his first acts was to publish an order which gave to the Protestants equal rights with the Catholics. He was a genial monarch, who loved to see every one happy and contented. "I wish," he said on one occasion, "that every peasant in France should have a fowl in the pot every Sunday."

The last years of his reign were years of peace and prosperity in the country. But, like all those who work for the good of the people, Henry made enemies, and to the grief of his subjects he was one day killed by the dagger of an assassin as he was riding in an open carriage through the streets of his capital.

XXIII.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS, THE LION OF THE NORTH.

NEAR the end of the sixteenth century men who were accustomed to watch the skies discovered in the heavens a brilliant star which they had never seen there before. As time went on the star appeared to grow brighter and brighter, and could be seen by the astronomers even in the daytime. Before long it began to lose its brilliancy, and after a period of about two years it disappeared altogether. At that time many people thought that the stars had a great deal to do with people's lives, and they began to say that the star which had been seen in the northern part of the sky foretold the brilliant career of some great leader in the north of Europe.

Before long these people became quite confirmed in this belief, for there arose in Sweden a Protestant king who had a very brilliant though comparatively short career as a general. This was Gustavus Adolphus, who, by his victories over Denmark, Russia, and Poland, earned for himself the title of the Lion of the North. After making his power felt in these parts of Europe, and becoming master of the Baltic and its shores, he turned his attention to lands which lay farther to

the southward. "The snow king will melt as he moves away from his ice-bound land," said the wiseacres in the towns of Germany and Italy. But the Swedish monarch was ready to take his chance, and mustering a force of thirteen thousand men, set out on his march to the southward.

At that time Germany was engaged in a great struggle known in history as the 'Thirty Years' War. This was one of those wars in which religion was mingled with politics, the story of which takes up so large a part of the history of Europe during the later period of the Middle Ages. The emperor was, of course, the champion of the Catholic party, and his two famous generals, Tilly and Wallenstein, were waging a war which filled the land with its horrors. The fields of grain were trampled by marching troops. Towns were besieged and burned. Innocent people, including thousands of women and children, were slain without mercy. Count Tilly took the city of Magdeburg in the year 1631—that is, during the reign of our King Charles the First—after a spirited defence on the part of the garrison. But the bravery of the defenders made no appeal to the ruthless conqueror. As soon as the city was captured the whole of the garrison was put to the sword, and the troops of the emperor commenced a massacre of the inhabitants, which only ceased when there were no more people left to be slaughtered.

This act of cruelty brought Gustavus Adolphus upon the scene as the avenger of the captured city of Magdeburg. He advanced into Saxony,

met Tilly near Leipsic, and inflicted upon him a crushing defeat. The people of Saxony were almost mad with delight, and thousands of men-at-arms joined the standard of the "Snow King." Another battle was fought shortly afterwards, in which Tilly received a mortal wound, and he died on the field.

The emperor now looked about for a general strong enough to cope with the Lion of the North. He had one distinguished leader, Count Wallenstein, who had not long before displeased his imperial master, and had lost his command in consequence. At the hour of need this general once more took the field, and after a while found himself face to face with the Swedish king near Lützen, in Saxony.

On the morning of the day of battle a dense fog hung over the field, and hid the combatants from each other. Towards noon, however, the fog lifted, the sky cleared, and Gustavus Adolphus advanced at the head of his army, leading the singing of Luther's hymn, "Ein Feste Burg ist Unser Gott" (a mighty fortress is our God). When the hymn had been sung the king unsheathed his sword, waved it above his head, and cried, "Forward, in God's name!" Then the battle began. "I shall fall in the defence of Protestantism," Gustavus had told his assembled nobles when leaving his northern home. "I bid you all a sincere—it may be an eternal—farewell." His foreboding was now to be justified.

He showed little personal prudence in the en-

gagement. Some time before he had been wounded in such a manner that he found it impossible to wear a breastplate, and he now placed himself at the head of his personal attendants wearing only an ordinary riding coat. Early in the engagement his arm was pierced by a pistol ball. For a time he concealed his wound lest his men should lose courage; but the loss of blood made him feel faint, and he said to one of his bodyguard, "Lead me away; I am sorely hurt."

The man at once seized the bridle of the king's charger, and turned the animal round. As he did so a ball struck the fainting leader in the back, and he fell to the ground. As he lay there in his last agony some of the emperor's soldiers rode up and asked his name. "I am the King of Sweden," was the reply, "and I die for freedom, offering my life as a free gift to the people of Germany."

With these words he passed away. The news of his death soon reached the ears of his followers, and, instead of depressing them, roused them to such a pitch of anger and regret that they quickly drove the soldiers of Wallenstein from the field. As the twilight was gathering the body of the "Snow King" was borne into a little village church not far from the field of battle, and was reverently laid before the altar. The soldiers stood near with bared heads, and the dust of battle upon their faces, while the village schoolmaster read the simple service for the dead. Next morning the body was removed, and was sent to the coast, whence it was shipped to Sweden.

The defeat of the imperial forces at Lützen greatly enraged the emperor, who made a stern investigation into the conduct of his officers, and punished some of them with death. After a while stories began to be circulated to the effect that Wallenstein was a traitor. The emperor declared him an outlaw and a rebel, and ordered his capture, alive or dead. A band of men—Irish and Scottish soldiers of fortune—set out in pursuit of him, and at last found him in his own castle at Egra, where they set upon him and hacked him to death with their swords.

The 'Thirty Years' War was ended by the Treaty of Westphalia. It is worth our while at this point to make a little inquiry into one of the effects of this treaty, so as to gain some general idea of the position of the leading countries of Europe at this time.

From this time each German state—kingdom, duchy, or principality—was to be free to choose its own religion. This meant that the old idea of world-lordship to be shared equally by the emperor and the Pope had passed away from the minds of men, and that the Holy Roman Empire existed no longer except in name. Further, the so-called "emperor" was forced to give up certain of his possessions to France and others to Sweden, while both Switzerland and Holland became independent. The lordship of the emperor was a mere shadow. Yet his empty claim to rule "the world" was to live on for more than a century longer.

XXIV.

RICHELIEU OF THE RED ROBE, A RULER OF MEN.

WHILE Germany was passing through a time of storm and stress during the 'Thirty Years' War, France made the most of her opportunity to increase her power and prestige. Her king was Louis the Thirteenth, but the real ruler of the land was that monarch's chief minister, Cardinal Richelieu.

Our history books usually show this man as the great champion of the Catholics and the fierce persecutor of the Protestants. It is true that Richelieu favoured and fought for the Catholics, for he was a prince or cardinal of their church ; but more than once in his career he was the friend of the Protestants. As a matter of fact, he was personally not greatly concerned in religious quarrels. His aim in life was to make the power of the king supreme, and then to rule the king himself. "I work," he said on one occasion, "to make King Louis the first man in Europe and the second in France."

The cardinal's carelessness about religious quarrels was well shown in his treatment of the Huguenots of La Rochelle. We saw how Henry of Navarre gave religious freedom and the rights

of citizenship to the Protestants of France. As time went on, however, they were not satisfied with what they had gained. In 1621 they held a great meeting at La Rochelle, their wealthiest city, and published a declaration which left little room for the king's authority. They also demanded that the fortress of St. Louis, which commanded their city, should be dismantled.

This practically amounted to setting up an independent city state within the borders of the French king's dominions, and such a condition of affairs could not, of course, be tolerated, whether those who made the claim were Protestants or Catholics. Richelieu himself mustered an army, at the head of which he made his way to La Rochelle, wearing a suit of armour under his cardinal's scarlet robe.

The Huguenot city was well protected. On the land side there were extensive marshes, which were quite impassable for an army. The king had no navy, so that he could not stop food supplies from entering the harbour. The capture of La Rochelle was likely to prove an extremely difficult matter, but such a leader as Richelieu was not to be deterred by difficulties.

He determined to build a great stone dike across the entrance to the harbour, and so keep out the ships bringing supplies of food to the city. The task seemed impossible, for it was the winter season, and the men who were ordered to do the work asked whether it was intended to kill them by slow degrees. At last they were persuaded to

begin by a promise of double wages, and after a supreme effort the task was finally accomplished.

Before long the brave defenders of the city began to feel the pangs of hunger, but men and women alike were determined not to surrender. They had news that an English fleet, under the Duke of Buckingham, was coming to their aid, and after months of weary waiting the vessels were seen in the distance. But when the English commander learned that the cardinal had built a great wall across the entrance to the harbour, he was afraid to come near it lest his vessels should be damaged or stranded. So he sailed away, leaving the starving Huguenots almost in despair.

Not long afterwards a second English fleet appeared, and made an attempt to enter the harbour; but by this time Richelieu was provided with a number of war vessels, which made a stout resistance. Then a storm arose, and the English fleet was badly damaged, and sailed home again.

Meanwhile the defenders of Rochelle were reduced to severe straits. Yet they held out steadily for some time longer, partly because the commander of the town had threatened to shoot with his own hand the first man who spoke of surrender. It seems a great pity that such a brave defence should not have achieved success, but when news came to the Huguenot chiefs that their English friends were making terms with the cardinal, the gates were at last opened to the enemy.

The citizens of Rochelle expected nothing less than a wholesale massacre, or at least forfeiture of their rights, by way of punishment. But Richelieu calmly assured them that he had no quarrel with them as Protestants. He only required of them that they should submit to the king's authority and dismantle their fortifications. There were to be no "free cities" on the Italian model within the borders of the dominions of the King of France. His orders were obeyed, and the so-called religious war, which was really a political quarrel, came to an end.

Richelieu took up the same attitude in his treatment of those great nobles who tried to make themselves too powerful, and who were inclined to resist the king's authority. Whether they were Catholic or Protestant mattered nothing to the cardinal. If any man tried to rise too high, he was cut down without mercy. On some charge brought forward by his numerous spies, the man would be arrested and condemned. Then the cardinal's agents would take over his estates, and his strong castles would be destroyed. Meanwhile the once powerful owner of these fortresses and wide domains would be languishing in the prison under the cardinal's residence, or lying in an unknown grave.

In his determination to make his royal master supreme in the land Richelieu knew no mercy and no scruple. "I never venture," he said on one occasion, "to undertake anything without having first reflected upon it ; but when once I have made up my mind, I go straight to my object. I cut

down everything, I hew down everything, *and afterwards cover all with my red robe.*"

One evening there was a brilliant assembly in the royal palace, which the king and his great minister honoured with their presence. After a while the monarch noticed that his courtiers were leaving him one by one and drawing near to the cardinal, who seemed to be the centre of interest and the chief leader in the conversation. King Louis sat chafing with anger, and at last rose to his feet to retire from the audience chamber. At once all the company rose to conduct his majesty to the doorway according to the usual custom. Richelieu bowed low as the king drew near to him, and stood aside to let his Majesty go by. "*Lead the way,*" cried the monarch, in a petulant fury ; "you seem to be first here." "It is true, sire," replied the ready-witted cardinal, lifting a large candlestick from a table and stepping before the king, "but it is only to show the way for your Majesty."

Having asserted his royal master's power within the limits of the French kingdom and his own power over his master, Richelieu turned his attention to outside matters. He was very anxious to check the power of the emperor who in the Thirty Years' War fought against the Protestants. One might have supposed that as a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church he would also have joined forces against the heretics if he took any part in the war at all. But instead of taking this course it was he who had invited Gustavus Adolphus to

come and fight against the emperor, and he had also sent money to the Protestant leaders in Germany to help them in their struggle. When this war was ended it left Germany weaker and France considerably stronger, so that the wily cardinal's object was attained.

So much for the position of France in Europe. Her power was increased in other quarters of the world also during the time of this powerful minister. England was just beginning the work of founding her empire overseas, and in America and India had gained a foothold which was never to be relinquished. Richelieu was clever enough to see the great advantage of colonial possessions, and he encouraged a number of merchants to form a company which was to have the sole right of collecting furs in North America. In return for this privilege the company was required to carry across the Atlantic at least four thousand French colonists within fifteen years. The descendants of these emigrants live in Quebec and Ontario to-day, and are subjects of our King.

When he had laid the foundation of this "New France," Richelieu took pains to keep as firm a hold upon the colony in the name of his royal master as he kept over the French kingdom itself. The colonists had been sent out to add to the wealth and power of France, and for no other reason. In this matter the great minister made a fatal mistake, and as a consequence France was never able to keep a firm hold upon her colonial

possessions, as the history of our own empire shows us again and again.

Richelieu also took the wrong course for France in making the power of the king supreme. This is shown very clearly in the subsequent history of the country, as we shall see in later chapters of this book. He was, however, consistent in his purpose right up to the end of his life. Before his time each new law had commenced with the words, "Enacted by the king with the consent of the people." And though this was not strictly true—for the French had no parliament such as England had—the phrase had doubtless kept before the minds of the French monarchs the fact that they owed at least some duty to their subjects. Richelieu, however, caused the words to be dropped, and substituted for them the simple, abrupt phrase, "Such is our pleasure." The whole history of his life may be said to be summed up in this change.

Such a strong man as Richelieu could not carry out his plans without making many enemies, and there were several plots against his life. But he had many secret agents specially employed to protect him against conspirators of this kind, and several of his enemies felt the weight of his avenging hand. In the very last year of his life he sent to the scaffold the leader of one of these conspiracies.

As the great cardinal lay on his deathbed, the confessor asked him whether he freely forgave all his enemies. "I have no enemies," he replied

quietly, "save those of France." Shortly afterwards he passed away. "Thou great man!" said another despotic ruler in later years when contemplating the cardinal's statue. "I would have given thee one half of my dominions to learn from thee how to govern the other half." The speaker was Peter the Great, of whose marvellous career we are to read in a later chapter.

XXV.

GALILEO, THE STAR-GAZER.

ONE day in the latter part of the sixteenth century some workmen were busy in the cathedral of an old Italian city, when one of them accidentally set swinging a large lamp which hung from the roof by a golden chain. Many people entered the church and knelt for a few moments at their devotions before going about their daily business, but only one, a young man of about eighteen years of age, noticed the swinging lamp.

He saw how regular was the backward and forward swing. Claspings his left wrist with his right hand, he tried to time the swinging by the beating of his pulse ; and he found that one was as regular as the other. This set him thinking deeply, and he began some inquiries which finally led to the invention of the pendulum clock as a means of measuring time.

The young man's name was Galileo, and he had been intended by his father for the profession of a physician. But the student took more delight in the study of mathematics, and was allowed to follow his own inclinations. By the time he was twenty-five he was a university professor, but by no means a bookworm or a recluse. He set men thinking about the way things work, and how it

is that the ordinary events of daily life really happen. He was like the little boy who was always asking "Why?"

He interested his pupils in such matters as how smoke rises in the air; how the village pump draws up the water; how birds fly; how fishes swim; and why a stone falls to the ground while a single feather or a piece of down floats in the air. In his time very wise men would have asserted that three pounds of lead would fall to the ground three times as quickly as one pound, and some of them might even have agreed that a pound of feathers must of necessity be lighter than a pound of lead!

In the old university town of Pisa there is a famous marble tower, which looks as if it were going to fall over at any moment. It is called the Leaning Tower, and was built some centuries before the time of Galileo, to serve as a "campanile" or bell-tower for the city. While the building was in progress the foundations gave way, and the tower began to lean in a very threatening manner. The architect, however, was not disconcerted. He strengthened the foundations and went on with his work, producing in due time a leaning tower which has become one of the wonders of the world.

Galileo used this tower for some of his experiments, for it was a convenient place from which to drop things to the ground; and by this means he found out many things about falling bodies. For example, he showed that one pound of lead would fall as quickly as a piece weighing ten pounds.



GALILEO BEFORE THE PAPAL TRIBUNAL.

(From the painting in the Luxembourg by J. N. Robert Fleury.)

He did not, of course, discover why things fall to the ground at all that was to be done about half a century later by our own mathematician, Sir Isaac Newton—but his experiments helped all who afterwards made any research into mechanics.

He was specially interested in the stars, and studied them patiently with such means as he had at his command. The problem was, of course, how to get near enough to them to find out more about them. He could not go to the stars, so he began to wonder whether by any means he could bring them nearer to him.

One day he heard that a certain Dutchman had invented a spy-glass, consisting of a tube with a piece of glass or lens at each end, by means of which he could make distant objects appear nearer and larger. This was the first telescope, and before long Galileo made one for himself with a piece of lead pipe and two pieces of glass, such as his grandfather had in his spectacles. This gave the inventor the power of seeing things three times their actual size, and he soon improved upon it so that it magnified thirty times. Then he watched the heavens on the first clear starry night, and saw many strange things never before revealed to the eye of man.

He saw that the strange markings on the moon, which have always aroused the curiosity of men, appeared to be mountains with lofty illumined peaks, and deep, dark chasms between them. He turned to the Pleiades, that group which the ancients had declared to be made up of seven

stars, and he counted forty in the constellation. Then he looked at the Milky Way, that curious band of light across the heavens, and found that it was formed of myriads of stars, so far away that they seemed to be like particles of fine silver dust.

He had always been familiar with the planet known as Jupiter, but he found that it had three attendant stars, which are now known as the moons of Jupiter. Galileo thought that they were other planets, and excitedly told his friends of his great discovery. Some were interested, others laughed, and one wise man reasoned, "The head of man has only seven openings—namely, two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and one mouth. How, then, can there be more than seven planets?"

This is a good instance of the kind of opposition which the great discoverer had to face in making his inquiries and publishing their results. But he was destined to meet with still more serious opposition, as we shall see before long.

Some sixty years before his time a certain astronomer named Copernicus had boldly asserted that the earth was not flat and stationary, as every one supposed, but that it was spherical or globe-shaped, and revolved round the sun. His opinion was greeted with mingled amusement and abuse, and before Galileo made his telescope he had joined with those who made merry about the "Copernican system." But as he went on with his studies in astronomy with the help of his wonderful glass, he began to think that, after all, Copernicus might be right. He studied still more deeply, and be-

came convinced that his views were correct, and at last he published the results of his studies. He was at once assailed by the priests, who tried to prove from the Bible that he was wrong. Galileo, in turn, tried to show that the Bible really supported his opinions. This brought him at once into conflict with the church, and the Pope summoned him to Rome to be tried as a heretic.

The trial lasted a long time, and Galileo had to face the questionings of some of the most learned men in Italy. It was easy enough for them to find passages in the Bible which appeared to prove that Galileo was in the wrong; and at last, under threat of torture, they forced the old man—his hair was now white with age—to declare, with his hand on the Scriptures, that his teaching about the movement of the earth round the sun was wicked and misleading. It was afterwards said that as he rose from his knees he stamped his foot and muttered, “And yet it *does* move.”

For a time the astronomer was left alone. But it was not long before he was again teaching things which the priests thought to be wrong, and once more he was brought up for trial, and sentenced to imprisonment. His confinement was, however, not very severe, and after a few months he was allowed to return to his own house near Florence. He was still a prisoner, and though his friends were allowed to visit him, he was not permitted to leave the house.

He went on with his investigations as far as his rapidly failing sight would permit him. One day

a visitor called upon him, who was reported to be a scholar and a poet, and whose name was John Milton. The old astronomer, now almost entirely blind, received the visitor with due courtesy, and as far as he was able made clear to him some of the wonderful things which he had discovered about the firmament which "sheweth God's handiwork." The interview is a deeply interesting one, when we remember that the day was to come when, blind in his turn, Milton would pour forth that glorious song which tells of the wonders of the heavens. Did he think of Galileo in later years when he, the blind poet, dictated these lines to his daughter?—

"Thus with the year
Seasons return ; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ;
But cloud instead and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate ; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

Not very long after Milton's visit Galileo passed away, and only a few months after his death Isaac Newton was born on Christmas Day in the village of Woolsthorpe, in Lincolnshire.

XXVI.

LOUIS XIV. OF FRANCE, *LE GRAND MONARQUE*.

WHEN Cardinal Richelieu died, he left behind him a king who made the laws of the country mere orders from the throne, beginning with the curt phrase, "Such is our pleasure." One hundred and fifty years later France passed through the great upheaval known as the Revolution, during which a king and a queen were executed by the furious people of Paris, and the pleasure of an angry mob was for a time the only law in the city. We can see cause and effect in the methods of Richelieu and the methods of the revolutionaries if we care to think a little and look below the surface of things.

Between the death of Richelieu and the Revolution France passed through a period of great splendour and great misery—splendour for the king and nobles, misery for the common people. When Richelieu's master, Louis the Thirteenth, passed away in his turn, he was succeeded by his son, who became Louis the Fourteenth, at the early age of five. Whenever men wish to point to a reign of regal splendour and magnificence, they give as a shining example the reign of Louis



LOUIS XIV. OF FRANCE.

the Fourteenth, who earned the title of *Le Grand Monarque*.

During his boyhood the land was under the rule of a certain Cardinal Mazarin, who by his imposition of heavy taxes roused the peasants to revolt. A severe struggle began which lasted for four years, and was known amongst the nobles as the War of the Sling, because the countrymen, being unarmed, fought chiefly with the slings with which the boys chased away the birds from the growing corn. Meanwhile the young king was taking delight in playing at soldiers, drilling his young playmates every day in the grounds of the royal palace, and preparing himself for that career of fighting for which, as we shall see, his reign was to be distinguished.

At this time fighting was going on in Germany, and the young king and his playmates would often receive news of the great exploits of a certain young Protestant general named Turenne, who at a very early age had shown that he was one of the best military leaders whom the world had ever seen.

As a boy, Turenne had always longed to be a soldier. One winter evening, after wandering about the fortifications of Sedan—where his father was kept as a state prisoner—he fell asleep on a cannon, and had a vivid dream, in which he saw himself at the head of a regiment, leading his troops to victory. The vision made such an impression upon his mind that, after recovering from a severe fever, the result of his exposure to the cold, he insisted upon embracing the profession



THE DREAM OF THE YOUNG TURENNE.

(From the picture by H. P. Motte.)

Turenne was the general who fought most successfully for Louis XIV. The picture requires no verbal description. The incident happened at Sedan, where Turenne's father was an officer.

of arms, and at the age of twelve years was allowed to go to Holland to join his uncle, the celebrated Prince Maurice, under whom he learnt the art of war.

At the early age of thirteen the young King of France took the government into his own hands, and determined to be king in deed as he already was in name. Shortly afterwards he went with Turenne upon a military expedition into the south of France, and studied the art of war under the clever young officer. He was filled with enthusiasm for a soldier's life, and thought that Turenne was nothing less than a genius.

"General," he said, when he took leave of him, "when I make war you must lead my troops." "I thank you, sire," said the general, with a bow. "I shall be proud to lead your Majesty's forces in any war in which you may be engaged." "Well," said the boy king carelessly, "I feel sure I shall have lots of wars, and you must hold yourself in readiness to help me."

The conversation was light and careless, and had little meaning at the time; for Turenne was a Protestant, and Louis the champion of the Catholic faith. But the general was a military leader who put his profession before all else, and when, some nine years later, he was offered the post of commander-in-chief of the armies of France, he took the work in hand and became a Catholic.

Just at this time Cardinal Mazarin, the king's chief minister, died. On the following day the royal counsellors assembled at the palace, eager to

know who was to be appointed in the cardinal's place. "To whom shall we now apply, your Majesty," asked one of them, "for direction in affairs of state?" "To me," said the young king readily. "I shall hereafter be my own prime minister." It is said that on another occasion one of these counsellors spoke of "the claims of the state," and was corrected by the king with the remark, "The state? I am the state."

So began the long and crowded reign of fifty years. Before we speak of the wars and the generals of the period, let us, in justice to Louis the Fourteenth, see what attempts he made to improve the condition of his people. We must not think of him as an inhuman monster, ready to crush the peasants and townspeople to the earth. He did a great deal for their comfort and happiness, but he would allow them no share in the management of the nation. He was the "father of his people," who knew best what was good for them.

He chose a man named Colbert to manage the money affairs of the kingdom. This man was very clever at finance, and he was able to swell the king's purse without increasing the burden of taxation. This he did partly by advising the king and his nobles to buy the carpets, silks, tapestries, and other goods of the French weavers. By this plan he greatly increased the volume of trade in the kingdom, and added to the general prosperity. But when Colbert had done his work, it was entirely spoilt by other advisers of the king.

Jealousy was naturally caused by the influence and wealth of the Huguenots, who were the skilled weavers of the kingdom, and laid plans to check their prosperity. They advised King Louis to set aside the law of Henry of Navarre, which gave liberty to the Protestants of France. The king did so, and it seemed as if the country was once more to be plunged into civil war.

But the threatened Protestants had heard of a country where they would be free to follow their trade and worship God as they pleased. This was England, where, as we know, the battle of Catholicism and Protestantism had been fought out, to the advantage of the latter. So having made inquiries, some of the Protestant workmen set out across the Channel, and were warmly welcomed in London and elsewhere. Others quickly followed them, until more than forty thousand had left France behind them for good. Thus the ministers of Louis the Fourteenth killed the goose which laid the golden eggs, or, at least, made it fly away.

It was in the latter part of his reign that King Louis fulfilled the prediction which he had made to Turenne when he lightly remarked that he thought he would "have many wars." His well-disciplined troops fought with Spain, Holland, England, and Germany, and under their splendid leaders won many famous victories. The most renowned of these great leaders was, of course, Marshal Turenne, who, when he won, began his dispatches with the words, "*We* have succeeded ;" but when he was

unsuccessful, commenced his letter to the king with the phrase, "*I have lost.*"

Many were the stories told round the camp fires of Turenne's kindness to his men, who trusted him completely. On one occasion he was leading a force in the depth of winter over heavy roads in Northern Germany. At last the men came to a deep morass, and as they waded through it some of the younger soldiers began to blame their leader for the hardships they were forced to endure ; but the older men rebuked them with the words, "You may depend upon it, Turenne is more concerned than we are. At this moment he is planning to deliver us. He watches for us while we sleep. He is our father. It is plain that you are but young."

On another occasion the way lay over ridges of high hills with narrow defiles between them. Considerable time was required for the whole of the troops to march through a single narrow defile ; and one very cold day, when such a passage was taking place, the marshal, quite spent with fatigue, sat down under a bush to wait till all had passed by, and fell asleep. When he awoke it was snowing fast ; but he found himself under a sort of tent made of soldiers' cloaks, hung up upon the branches of trees planted in the ground, and round it were standing, in the cold and snow, all unsheltered, a party of soldiers. Turenne called out to them, to ask what they were doing there. "We are taking care of our father," they said ; "that is our chief concern."

With such troops and such a leader, it is no

wonder that King Louis was victorious. But in the end his military glory was dimmed. For a great leader arose in Prince Eugene of Savoy, who in the early part of his career had offered his services to King Louis and had been curtly refused. The French king lived to regret that refusal. Eugene left France behind him, declaring that he would never enter the country again except as a conqueror, and went to fight against the Turks, who had laid siege to Vienna. So brave and skilful was he that he obtained rapid promotion, and was at last sent into Northern Italy in command of an Austrian force to oppose the troops of Louis the Fourteenth, who was threatening the prince's own province of Savoy. Eugene gained several victories over the French troops, and then marching into France itself, plundered several towns, and thus redeemed his promise.

At last King Louis had so aroused the princes of Europe against him that they formed a strong league, with the object of finally crushing him; and in the great battle of Blenheim the Duke of Marlborough united with Prince Eugene in inflicting a severe defeat upon the forces of "le Grand Monarque," and so checking his vainglorious military career. Never again did his armies strike such terror to the hearts of the people of Central Europe. It is true that fighting went on for some years longer, but the power of Louis was broken. He lived for only two years after the declaration of peace which ended the long and disastrous European war.

XXVII.

MOLIÈRE, THE FRENCH SHAKESPEARE.

ONE day when King Louis the Fourteenth was a young man of about twenty a great event took place in the royal palace. A young nobleman had arrived some days before, and had reported to the pleasure-loving court that he had seen on his estate in the country a group of strolling players who had acted very finely, and with whom he had been pleased to be amused. It was no slight triumph on the part of any one to amuse the spoilt courtiers of the king, and the young noble was ordered to bring the players to court immediately. Messengers were sent in search of them, and they were promised such an audience as they had never seen before.

So in the guardroom of the old palace of the Louvre, where the picture now hangs which is shown on page 234, there was brought before King Louis a man whose name was destined to live as long as his own, and whose services to mankind were to be much more valuable than those of the king of "many wars." This was the leader of the strolling players, whose real name was Jean Baptiste Poquelin, but who is known to fame as

Molière, and who has often been called, with some amount of fitness, "the French Shakespeare."

The performance took place "before their majesties and the whole court." There were the queen-mother, Anne of Austria, who along with Cardinal Mazarin had ruled the kingdom since the death of Richelieu; the younger brother of King Louis, whom his mother persisted in dressing like a girl because he was "so very beautiful;" the young king himself, dressed in splendid robes and delicate ruffles; and a crowd of courtiers, male and female, whose gay clothing gave to the company the appearance of a bed of delicate hothouse flowers.

The play which the actors first presented was a solemn tragedy such as, strange to say, pleased the fancy of the light-hearted king and his butterfly courtiers. Then followed a short play, of which Molière himself was the author; for, like Shakespeare, he had recently taken to writing and adapting plays for his own troupe of actors. It was a light, bright comedy in which a great deal of innocent fun was made of an elderly doctor, and its merriment greatly pleased the king and his friends, so that they laughed and laughed again. From that day the strolling players strolled no longer. They became the royal entertainers, with the title of "The Prince's Troupe," and a settled payment for each performance.

Molière and his companions had for several years lived a precarious life, wandering about the country and playing in barns to crowds of rustics.



Molière and his Troupe.

(From the painting by G. Mellingue.)

They had often been hungry and homeless, sleeping in outhouses or, during summer, in the fields. These wandering days were now over, and the leader of the troupe became the favourite of the king, who delighted in his wit and brightness, and in the way in which he could seize upon the follies of mankind and, laughing gently, hold them up to the laughter of the world.

The actor was particularly clever and entertaining in the fun he made of the fopperies and affectations of the courtiers. The king had, as an especial honour, made him a *valet de chambre*, and one of the duties of the office was to help to make the king's bed. We can picture the smile upon the face of the actor when a mincing courtier approached him, clad in silk stockings, embroidered vest, and laced coat with long ruffles at the wrists, and gently inquired, "M. de Molière, may I have the honour of making the king's bed with you?" Then the two would set to work to shake the pillows and smooth the sheets, with many bows and courtesies to each other as they performed their duties.

There were, however, many of the courtiers who were of noble blood, so that it enraged them to see a comedian, who was the son of an upholsterer, accorded the honour of making the royal bed; and they showed in many ways how great was their scorn of the man whose real fault was that he dared to laugh at their petty follies. At last some of them refused to eat with him, and Molière proudly withdrew from the court. But King Louis heard

of the slight put upon his lively friend, and one morning sent for him and said, "I hear that you are badly entertained, M. de Molière, and that my people do not think you good enough to eat with them. Perhaps you are hungry. I myself awoke with a very good appetite this morning. Sit down here and take some food with me." Then the king, cutting a chicken, and ordering Molière to seat himself, helped him to a wing and took one for himself, at the same time ordering that the most influential people of the court should be admitted. "You see," said the monarch to them, "that I am making M. Molière eat something, for my people do not find him good enough to eat with them."

After this, of course, Molière was cordially invited to share the hospitality of the highest in the land, and accepted the invitations partly in order that he might go on with his work of gently rebuking with a harmless laugh the follies of worldly people. He was now engaged in writing the plays which made him famous, following the example of Shakespeare, who passed away only six years before the birth of the great French dramatist.

Louis the Fourteenth found the palace of the Louvre not quite to his taste ; and he had no love for the people of Paris, who even in his time were inclined to show their disapproval of the wastefulness and splendour of the court. So he made up his mind to build a new palace at Versailles, about twelve miles to the south-west of Paris. This new royal home and its gardens cost an enormous sum



In the British Embassy during the Marriage of St. Basil

of money, and when all was ready a staff of four thousand servants was employed to minister to the wants of the king and his courtiers. The new palace was soon the envy of all the other monarchs of Europe, and attempts were made to rival it. Thereupon La Fontaine, one of the wits of the court of Louis, wrote this famous fable of the frog and the ox :—

“ An envious frog once chanced to see
 An ox that was both big and fat ;
 She cried, ‘ I’d give my life to be
 As huge and corpulent as that.
 Well, let me try.’ Oh, how she tried !
 She puffed and blew, and then she cried,
 ‘ Am I as big ?’ Her sister smiled.
 ‘ No, nothing like it, my dear child.’
 Again she puffed, again she blew ;
 At last, by vain ambition curst,
 She blew once more, and then she burst.”

In order to pass or kill the time splendid entertainments were organized at the palace of Versailles, and in these Molière and other poets and dramatists took their part, as well as some of the proudest nobles of the land, and, upon occasion, even the king himself.

Thus the time passed at the new royal home in “a succession of all the fancies that could charm the eyes and ears ; cavalcades, riding at the ring ; concerts, vocal and instrumental ; splendid feasts, at which the waiters were gay youths and maidens dressed as Laughter, Sport, or Delight ; comedies, mingled with singing and dancing ; transformation scenes, fireworks, illuminations, races, lotteries—usually an entire week passed outside of ordinary life in the regions of fairyland.” The gay courtiers

of Versailles figure in many of the plays which Molière wrote at this time, and the great dramatist continued to laugh at their follies. But for one of his latest plays he found a subject even more laughable than the absurdities of the court. The young nobles and dainty ladies at least played their parts with grace and ease, and as if "to the manner born." But Molière had evidently seen some one from another sphere of life try to ape their airs and graces, and he made this the subject of his "*Bourgeois Gentilhomme*" (the shopkeeper turned gentleman).

In this play we have a certain M. Jourdain, who, having made a fortune in his shop, sets out to spend his money "like a gentleman." He is a good-humoured fellow, ready to laugh even at himself, and undisturbed both by his wife's scolding and the jeers of his house-servants. His tailor, with a smirk, makes him as gay as a peacock; the music-master and the singer try to make him accomplished enough for a dainty drawing-room; and the professor from the university gives him lessons in elocution, and at last astonishes him by telling him that he has been talking "prose" all his life. Having learnt this wonderful fact, he hastens to tell his wife. "Do you know what you are talking at the present moment?" he asks.

Madame Jourdain. I know that what I am talking is good sense, and that you ought to change your manner of living.

Monsieur Jourdain. I don't mean that. I mean, do you know *what* the words are that you are now saying ?

Madame Jourdain. They are sensible words, and that is more than I can say of your conduct.

Monsieur Jourdain. I don't mean that. I ask you, what I am now saying to you at the present moment, what is it ?

Madame Jourdain. Stuff and nonsense.

Monsieur Jourdain. It's *prose*, you ignorant woman !

Madame Jourdain. *Prose* ?

Monsieur Jourdain. Yes, *prose*. All that is prose is not verse, and all that is not verse is prose. There ! that's what one learns by study !

The play was full of light-hearted fun, yet it was written when the dramatist was sick unto death. He passed away one evening after taking part in one of his own plays, in which he makes fun of people who imagine themselves to be afflicted with all kinds of maladies. So, like a brave man, he kept up the merry laughter to the end.

XXVIII.

CHARLES XII., THE "SWEDE OF THE MAD LIFE."

THERE is a fine passage in a poem by Samuel Johnson which sums up in a few lines the crowded career of one of the most remarkable military leaders in history. This was Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, who occupied the throne of that northern kingdom during the time of our William the Third. The poet in these lines wishes to show the emptiness of military glory.

" On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide :
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him and no labours tire ;
O'er love, o'er fear extends his wide domain,
Unconquered lord of pleasure and of pain ;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield—
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field.

" Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign ;
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her claims in vain ;
' Think nothing gained,' he cries, ' till naught remain,
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the Polar sky.'

" The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait ;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,

And Winter barricades the realms of Frost.
He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay—
Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa's day :

“ The vanquished hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands—
Condemned a needy suppliant to wait,
While ladies interpose and slaves debate.

“ But did not Chance at length her error mend?
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress, and a dubious hand.
He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral or adorn a tale.”

Charles was only a boy of fifteen when he was crowned King of Sweden, but in strength and courage he was already a man and a hero. He had spent a great part of his boyhood in the saddle, and was already a renowned hunter. His favourite studies were geography and military tactics, and it was not long before he had a splendid opportunity of testing his fitness as a leader in actual warfare.

We have learnt nothing so far in this book of the great country of Russia, partly because the history of that country is not very closely connected with the history of Western Europe. It lay, for the most part, outside the influence exercised by the emperor and the Pope, and up to the time of which we are now writing it was in a state of semi-barbarism. But in the days of Charles the Twelfth Russia was under the rule of a Tsar known to history as Peter the Great, of whom

we shall learn more in our next chapter. This monarch united with the kings of Denmark and Poland against King Charles of Sweden, and the plan of these rulers was that they should divide among them the dominions of the Swedish king.

The news of the alliance was eagerly welcomed by the young warrior king, who was only eighteen years old, and before long he had collected an army, with which he set out for Denmark. In a short time the Danes sued for peace, and Charles marched forthwith into Russia. A great battle took place at Narva, in which the Russians were completely defeated. The fight took place in a driving snowstorm. King Charles lost one of his boots in a bog; and a bullet struck his body, but was merely flattened against his iron coat. "With my brave boys in blue behind me, I am afraid of nothing," said the exultant soldier, and he proceeded almost at once to make plans for attacking the kingdom of Poland.

The Poles were in a state of consternation when they heard of the advance of the Swedish army. A certain beautiful lady of noble family named Marie Aurora made up her mind to try to avert a war. She wrote a letter to the Swedish king begging for an interview; but Charles made no reply. Then she set out in the depth of winter for the camp of the Swedes; but when she reached the young king's tent he curtly refused to see her. The lady stayed near the camp for some time, and one day saw King Charles come riding towards



THE FUNERAL PROCESSION OF CHARLES THE TWELFTH OF SWEDEN.

her. She alighted from her carriage and knelt before him in the muddy road. The young king, without stopping his horse, bared his head and made a courteous bow. Then he rode off at a gallop. In a short time Poland lay entirely at his mercy. He dethroned its king, and placed on the throne another who would watch the interests of his patron.

Then the conquering hero marched into Saxony, where he drove all before him in his impetuous course. But while he was absent Tsar Peter eagerly seized his opportunity and captured a portion of Swedish territory, on which he founded his new capital, St. Petersburg. Charles marched northward and defeated the Russians; but the latter kept their new city, by means of which they now had access to the sea—when it was not frozen over.

Charles now led his army into Southern Russia, careless of the intense cold of the Black Sea region. What were ice and snow to the hardy warriors of the northern kingdom? But when the long marches began even the hardy Swedes suffered terribly, and thousands succumbed to the cold.

The king was determined to lay siege to the fortress of Pultowa, and during the operations was struck in the foot by a bullet. He was carried to the surgeon, who cut open the foot to remove the small splinters of bone. The young king bore the operation without flinching; but the wound troubled him greatly, and he was obliged to be carried about in a litter. Finally, he was defeated by the Russians, and made his escape into Turkey.

He lived for several years in the Turkish town of Bender Abbas, where he built for himself a stone house like a fort. He was allowed by the Sultan to keep a bodyguard of Turkish foot-soldiers, who were very proud of their brave master, whom they named "Iron Head." They would often say to each other, "With such a leader as our master we could conquer the world."

Though living in retirement, King Charles had not forgotten his hatred of Russia and of Tsar Peter; and when, in his ardent desire to obtain outlets to the sea, the Russian monarch captured certain ports on the Black Sea, King Charles and the Sultan united against him. Peter took fright, and sent to the Turkish commander a wagon-load of money, and by this means bought peace. King Charles was furious, and made his anger felt. The Sultan advised him to go back to Sweden. He hotly refused, and the Turks attacked his house at Bender Abbas, meaning to make him a prisoner.

There was a desperate fight, and many lives were lost before the angry monarch was finally captured. Before long he was allowed to set out for Sweden, and came at last to the strong fortress of Stralsund, on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea. Here he was promptly besieged by the forces of his old enemies—Russia, Poland, Saxony, and Denmark—who were eager for his downfall.

Charles welcomed the attack and the opportunity for another fight. He took his meals in the open air within range of the enemy's guns; he slept

on the ground, with a stone for his pillow. Not one of his soldiers fared worse during the siege than their brave commander. But all his bravery was of no avail, and when he saw that Stralsund must eventually fall into the hands of his enemies, he made his escape by night and crossed over to Lund, in Sweden.

His kingdom was now in a sad state of poverty and desolation, entirely owing to his passion for military glory. Yet he seemed blind to the misery of his people, and began to make plans for a war with Norway. Before long he was once more in the field and making a furious attack upon a small fortress. One morning, as he was looking over the top of one of the trenches, he was struck by a cannon-ball and instantly killed. Many people were glad when they heard the news of his death, for his strange conduct had forced them to the conclusion that the Swedish king was really mad. So ended the career of a brave and kindly man, who was one of the best-loved military leaders and one of the worst kings who figure in the pages of history.

XXIX.

PETER THE GREAT, THE ROYAL SHIPWRIGHT.

THE persistent enemy of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden was Tsar Peter of Russia, whose absorbing ambition in life was to obtain for Russia an outlet to the open sea. He saw clearly enough that while his country remained without ice-free ports she was cut off from the rest of Europe. So he planned and schemed to reach the sea both in the north and the south of his great and unwieldy kingdom.

Peter came to the throne at the age of ten and in the year 1682—that is, near the end of the reign of our King Charles the Second. He was not, however, sole sovereign; for, strange to say, his brother Ivan was at first associated with him. During the first years of the joint reign the government was in the hands of the young princes' sister, the Princess Sophia, and the Prime Minister, Galitzin.

Now the princess was an ambitious woman, many years older than her brothers, and she had a great desire to become sole empress. So she plotted with Galitzin to that end. "Madam," said the Prime Minister one day, "Prince Ivan is little better than an idiot, and we need fear nothing

from him ; but Prince Peter alarms me, for he wishes to know everything."

In a few years Peter had learnt something that caused him to take instant action. He discovered a plot against his own life, and found that its real authors were his sister and Galitzin. At once he took the control of affairs into his own hands. His sister was promptly sent to a convent, where she remained for the rest of her life. Galitzin was banished to a prison near Archangel, on the icy coast of the White Sea. Ivan was now mentally incapable of taking any share in the government at all, and so Peter began his wonderful reign.

He had at first a very indifferent army ; so he employed a clever Swiss general to organize the royal forces, and for a while served under this man as a private soldier. He performed the most menial duties, and passed gradually through the various grades of officers until he became a general. Meanwhile the men were learning their duties, and the army rapidly became a splendid fighting machine.

One of the Tsar Peter's favourite recreations was to sail in a small boat, which had been made for his father, up and down the river which flowed past the royal palace at Moscow. The construction of this boat, which had been built by a Dutchman, interested the young Tsar very greatly, and the builder became his constant companion. Day after day the two men spent several hours upon the water, and after a while Peter made up his mind to go to Archangel, at that time the only port in



PETER THE GREAT IN THE SHIPYARD AT DEPTFORD.

(From the painting by D. Maclise, R.A., in the possession of the Royal Holloway College.)

the kingdom, and learn what he could about the ships which visited the place when the harbour was not blocked with ice.

He stayed for several months in the northern port, and learned from a Dutch captain a great deal about the management of sailing vessels. Then he wished to learn something about the actual building of ships, for he had for a long time cherished the ambition to become the head of an efficient navy. The idea was no sooner conceived than the energetic young ruler set about carrying it out. He placed the government of the country in the hands of certain trusted noblemen, and set out for Amsterdam, the chief city of Holland.

Arrived there, he paid several visits to the docks, where he inspected the shipping very closely. Then he went to a little town called Zaandam, not far away, and became a workman in a yard where vessels were built for service in the trade of the Dutch East India Company. Here he took a lodging in a small cottage, worked with the other men, among whom he was known as Peter Bass, and took every opportunity of learning all that he possibly could about the construction of ships.

After a while he had learned all that could be taught him at this place, and still felt his knowledge to be somewhat imperfect. He therefore made other inquiries, and found that he could best finish his course of practical shipbuilding by crossing over to England and visiting the shipyards near the mouth of the Thames. So he crossed the North Sea, and lived for a time at Deptford, not

far from London, where he learned still more about shipbuilding. He was, of course, received at the English court, and greatly astonished the fine lords and ladies by his brusqueness and his carelessness in matters of personal appearance.

When the Tsar's course of instruction in practical shipbuilding was completed, he set out once more for his own kingdom. Reaching Moscow, he found that certain men in authority had abused the trust which he had placed in them, and at once had them put to death. In a short time he was personally superintending the building of ships on a river which flowed into the Black Sea. People made merry about ships on a river, and asked which part of the high seas belonged to Russia. Peter replied that before long his ships would have both ports and free passage on the sea. When all was ready the Russian fleet sailed down the river and captured Azof from the Turks. So the energetic Tsar obtained an outlet to the sea—of a kind.

We have already seen how Peter gave Russia a new capital, which was named Petersburg, after the founder. When the Tsar first proposed to build a city on the swamps of the Neva he was heartily laughed at. But Peter had an answer ready. He had seen how the Dutch had made Amsterdam one of the greatest ports of the world, although its buildings rested on what had once been a dreary swamp. What the Dutch had done he could do. So he set to work with his accustomed energy, and in spite of the fact that Charles

the Twelfth laid claim to the province through which the river Neva found its lazy way to the Baltic Sea.

When the first part of the new city had been built—at great expense of treasure and human life, for Peter knew no scruples in working out his plans—the Russian army and navy, acting together, captured from the Swedes two fortresses at the mouth of the Neva. Then followed the siege of Pultowa, where Charles the Twelfth of Sweden met his master, as we saw in our last chapter. Both kings took part in the battle outside the fortress, and both were in the hottest of the fight.

After this success Tsar Peter soon swept the Swedish ships from the Gulf of Finland, and captured Helsingfors and other towns which had belonged to the Swedes. In a few months the first Dutch merchant ship sailed up the Neva and anchored near the new city. The Tsar himself went on board, purchased the whole cargo, and made the captain a large present of money. Before long the new capital was engaged in a more or less profitable trade with the various ports on the shores of the Baltic and the North Sea.

The Tsar also turned his attention to the internal trade of his country. He built new roads, dredged the rivers, provided boats for the inland waterways, and began the gigantic task of linking up the Baltic, Caspian, and Black Seas by means of canals. In these and in many other ways Tsar Peter tried to rouse his subjects to take their part in the affairs



Maria Theresa and the Hungarian Magnates.

(From the painting by Laslett J. Pott, Collection Augustin Rischwitz.)

of Western Europe, where people still regarded the Russians as uncivilized barbarians.

This taunt of barbarism, of which he was quite conscious, troubled Tsar Peter rather more than one would have expected in such a forceful character ; and when he returned from his western travels, he made many attempts to dragoon his people into manners and customs somewhat like those of the countries he had lately seen. The Russian beard, a safe protection for face and throat against the cold, seemed to him to be an especial mark of barbarism ; and he promptly placed a tax upon it, in the hope of gently encouraging his people to shave like the gentlemen of France and England. He ordered the ladies and gentlemen of his court to imitate the style of dress of the lands lying to the westward, and issued many orders which would tend to change the mode of the life of his people. As a result there was soon a great deal of discontent throughout the country, which Tsar Peter put down with an iron hand. His own son, Prince Alexis, rebelled against him, and after trial was put to death as a traitor.

Near the end of his reign Tsar Peter paid a visit to Zaandam, where he had served as a shipwright. To his great delight he found many workmen there who remembered him, and he went to see one of them in his smith's forge. The man was just about to heat a piece of iron in his furnace, when the Tsar came and took it out of his hand. Then Peter blew the bellows, heated the iron, and beat

it out upon the anvil with the ease and finish of a practised craftsman.

The Tsar was also pleased to find that the little cottage in which he had lived as a workman was kept carefully preserved. It is still shown to visitors, and contains the simple furniture used by the monarch when he was learning the trade which did such a great deal for his country. Over the fireplace in one room runs the inscription which sums up the work of his life, "To a great man nothing is little."

Peter the Great had many faults, but he well deserved the title which history has conferred upon only a few of its foremost rulers, and never without sufficient reason. We shall read in our next chapter of another monarch who earned the title of "the Great."

XXX.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, THE MAKER OF PRUSSIA.

It is always interesting to learn something of the boyhood and youth of a man who takes a prominent place in history. Let us look for a few moments into the records which tell of the early training of the prince who ultimately became known as Frederick the Great.

His father, Frederick William the First, was ruler of Prussia, that kingdom which eventually became the most powerful of the various states of Germany, as we shall see. It was the king's desire that his son should be a great general, for he saw plainly enough that Prussia would have to carve its way to greatness by means of the sword. So he tried from the earliest possible moment to accustom the young prince to the life of the soldier.

A regiment of boys, about one hundred strong, was made up from the royal military schools in the Prussian capital, and was placed under the command of an experienced officer. The boy soldiers had a very strict drill-master, and little Prince Fritz was ordered to observe his methods very closely, so that at the earliest possible moment he might be able to give the necessary orders himself. This he was able to do after a comparatively short time,

and, dressed in his little cocked hat, blue, gold-laced coat, and tight white breeches, the little prince would rap out the word of command like an experienced drill-master. The boys had guns, sword, and small brass cannon, and thus their soldier play was very real indeed. Within doors Prince Fritz had lessons from the best of teachers in mathematics, as well as in military tactics and engineering.

One day the German prince who bore the title of Elector of Hanover, and who was also King George the First of England, came to Berlin on a visit to the royal family there. He was entertained in royal fashion, and was shown, as one of the "sights" of the royal city, little Prince Fritz drilling his company of cadets in the palace garden with due military smartness and precision.

When the King of Prussia went to review—and he was continually drilling and reviewing his soldiers—he took his little son with him, and he taught the boy how hard and difficult the life of a soldier must always be. He took the prince with him also whenever he went out to hunt the boar, the fox, or the wolf in the wild forests of Northern Germany. At one time they would ride on heavy horses; at another on what was called a "sausage-car," a kind of pole with wheels attached to it, on which the riders sat astride. And on all these expeditions little Fritz was trained to disregard all severities of weather—"summer heat and sandy dust, winter's frost storms and muddy rain."

Yet in spite of all this stern preparation for a soldier's life, the young prince angered his father greatly by a fondness for playing the flute—"an effeminate practice," said the stern old king. He would not give up his beloved music, and his father made his life so uncomfortable that he determined to run away, and, like many other fugitives from the Continent, chose to run to England, where his uncle, King George the Second, might be expected to defend him from his angry parent.

The young prince's plan was discovered, and he was at once placed under military guard as a deserter. One of the would-be companions of his flight was shot before his eyes in the palace courtyard, and it was given out that a similar fate awaited Prince Fritz himself. The news reached the ears of the emperor at Vienna and the kings of Poland and Sweden, who at once begged the angry King of Prussia to spare the life of his own son. The young man was allowed to live, but for a while was kept a close prisoner.

Not long afterwards the king died, and his son succeeded him. "Our great care," he said at his accession, "shall be to make every one of our subjects contented and happy." Then he took an immediate step, which proved that he meant to keep his word to the letter. There had been a serious shortage in the wheat supply just before the old king's death, and orders had been given that the grain which belonged to the crown was not to be sold. This was a great hardship for the



FREDERICK THE GREAT.
(From the painting by Menzel.)

people, and one of the first acts of the new king was to order that the corn should be sold to those who wished to buy it.

Before long the young king was engaged in a desperate struggle for the possession of that part of Central Europe which is known as Silesia. Frederick claimed the province, which had been ruled by a duke, on the ground that it had been agreed long ago that when its ruler died without an heir the territory was to pass to Prussia ; and not long before the Duke of Silesia had died, leaving no successor, whereupon the duchy had been taken over by Austria.

The Prussian king at first offered to pay a large sum of money to Maria Theresa, the Archduchess of Austria, if she would give up Silesia to him. The princess refused outright, and in reply Frederick mustered a strong army, at the head of which he marched upon Breslau, the capital of Silesia, which opened its gates to him without demur. The Austrian troops now took the field also, and, near the town of Mollwitz, suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Prussian army.

Maria Theresa was a woman of undaunted spirit, and resolved to make a brave resistance to the invader. She was Queen of Hungary in her own right, and not long before had been crowned with the iron crown of that kingdom. Then, according to custom, she had ridden to the top of a hill called the Konisberg, and had pointed with a naked sword to the four quarters of the heavens as a sign that she was ready to

defend her kingdom against all comers. She knew that the Hungarian nobles were famous fighters, and she felt sure that she could trust to them for help and protection in this crisis. So she invited a number of them to meet her at Presburg in what was practically a council of war. The historian Thomas Carlyle thus describes the scene at this meeting, the central incident of which is pictured on page 251 :—

“Hungarian magnates are in high session when the queen enters, beautiful and sad, and among the ministers in attendance is noticeable a nurse with the young archduke, a fine, thriving boy who became Emperor Joseph the Second in due time.

“Her Majesty, coming forward to speak, took the child in her arms, and there, in a clear melodious voice, sorrow and courage on her noble face, beautiful as the moon riding among wet, stormy clouds, spoke a short Latin speech, in substance as follows :—

“‘Hostile invasion of Austria! Imminent peril to this kingdom of Hungary, to our own person, to our children, to our crown? Forsaken by all, I have no resource but to throw myself on your loyalty and help, and invoke the ancient Hungarian virtue to rise swiftly and save me!’

“Whereat the assembled Hungarian synod, their wild Magyar hearts touched to the core, start up in impetuous acclaim, flourish aloft their drawn swords, and shout unanimously, ‘Let us die for our *king*, Maria Theresa!’”

In spite of this whole-hearted support, the troops of the brave young queen were defeated, and she was forced to surrender almost the whole of Silesia to Frederick of Prussia. Maria Theresa accepted her defeat, but only for the moment. For several years she planned to form a great European alliance against her adversary, and in 1756 Frederick was faced by the necessity of fighting France, Austria, Russia, Sweden, and Saxony in combination. It looked as if the days of Prussia were numbered, but it was in the momentous campaigns which followed that Frederick won his title of "the Great," and raised his kingdom to the rank of a first-class European power. The great struggle began in 1756, lasted till 1763, and is therefore known in history as the Seven Years' War.

At the beginning of the contest Frederick was victorious, but as time went on the Austrians defeated his army again and again, and at the end of three years the allies had almost forced him to give up the war. At the great fight of Künersdorf he led the attack three times in person, and three times his horse was killed under him. But his desperate courage was all in vain, and after this defeat he wrote to a friend, "All is lost. I do not intend to outlive the ruin of the Fatherland. Good-bye for ever."

But the king appears to have taken heart again, possibly because at this time the Austrians lost the support of the Russians, who withdrew from the war and not long afterwards became the allies of

their late enemies the Prussians. The tide had now turned, and in one great fight after another Frederick defeated the Austrians. He came out of this struggle as an acknowledged leader and a consummate general who could snatch victory out of the very jaws of defeat. Silesia was now part of his own kingdom, and the foundations had been laid of the new Germany which became one of the most powerful countries in the world.

But Frederick the Great was not only a famous general ; he was also a beneficent and firm ruler of his subjects. He once described himself as the "chief servant of his people," and he worked and schemed for their benefit from early morning until late at night. His kingdom had poured out her treasures of men and money during the Seven Years' War, and as soon as the fighting was over he set to work to make the country prosperous once again.

He lent money to those farmers who were on the verge of bankruptcy. He bought seed for others, and in many places started draining operations, which made it possible to create prosperous farms in places which had once been dreary swamps. Like Peter the Great, he encouraged internal trade and oversea commerce by every means in his power. Like Peter also, he exacted immediate obedience from his people. His word was law, but he was obeyed because his subjects trusted to his good will, and knew that he worked continuously for their good.

One day in the autumn of 1786 the king at-

tended a great review, at which he caught a severe cold. In a few days he had passed away. His last conscious act was to give directions to his servants to throw a coverlet over one of his favourite dogs, which was, like his master, suffering from the effects of a chill.

XXXI.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, "OUR LAST GREAT MAN."

WHEN the great Napoleon, who made himself Emperor of the French, was a boy at school, he hated France and the French with all the strength of his determined nature. For he was by birth a Corsican, and his father had taken a prominent part in the desperate struggle which preceded the capture of Corsica by France in the year 1769.

He was sent as a boy to a military school at Brienne, where his surliness soon earned for him the dislike of his schoolfellows. They would often jeer at him because of the conquest of his native country by France, and he would retort, "Had the French been four to one they would never have conquered Corsica, but they were ten to one." Even the professors of the school would in his hearing speak with disrespect of the Corsican patriot Paoli, who had led the resistance against France; and the boy one day replied to their taunts: "Paoli was a great man. He loved his country; and I shall never forgive my father, who was his adjutant, for consenting to the union of Corsica with France. He ought to have followed Paoli's fortunes, and to have fallen with him."

But the whole of Napoleon's school-time was not spent in quarrels of this kind. One of his playfellows, who afterwards became the great man's secretary, relates the following schoolboy story:—

“During the winter of 1783-4, so memorable for the heavy falls of snow, which blocked up the roads that covered the country to a depth of six or eight feet, Napoleon was greatly at a loss for those outdoor amusements and retired walks in which he used to take so much delight.

“During play-hours he had no alternative but to mix with the crowd of his schoolfellows, and to walk with them up and down the area of an immense hall. To relieve himself from this monotonous parade, he contrived to stir up the whole school to amuse themselves in a different manner, by forming passages through the snow in the great courtyard, and erecting hornworks, sinking trenches, raising parapets, etc.

““Our works being completed,’ said he, ‘we can divide ourselves into parties, act a kind of siege, and I undertake to direct the attack.’ The proposal was joyfully acceded to by his schoolfellows, and immediately put into execution. This mimic combat was carried on during a period of fifteen days, and did not cease until, gravel and small stones having got mixed with the snow, many of the boys were actually wounded.”

Thus in an atmosphere of real and mimic strife the boy grew up who was destined to involve the

whole of Europe in continual warfare for a period of some twenty years. When his school days were over he was sent to a military college in Paris, where we soon find him complaining to the authorities that the life of the place was "too expensive and delicate" for "poor gentlemen," and ill suited to prepare them for the hard life of a soldier. He suggested that instead of having servants to wait upon them, the students should attend to their own personal wants, and should eat the coarse bread made for the soldiers of the ranks. The superior officers were naturally angry at the "suggestions" of a youth of sixteen, and entered him for his examination as early as possible, so as to get rid of such an uncomfortable student. He was then appointed a sub-lieutenant of artillery, and after staying in Corsica for some time came back to Paris, where he witnessed some of the first episodes of the Revolution.

In the year 1793 he was sent to Toulon by the revolutionary government. The people of this city had invited the English and Spanish fleets to come into their harbours and defend the place against the troops sent from Paris. Bonaparte was in command of the artillery which invested the place, and greatly distinguished himself during the siege and capture of the city. One day during the operations he wished to prepare a dispatch, and called for some one who could use a pen. A young sergeant named Junot leaped forward, and leaning on the breastwork wrote as Napoleon dictated. As he finished, a shot struck the ground

by his side, scattering the paper on which the ink was still wet. "Good," said the young soldier, with a merry laugh; "this time we shall spare our sand."* The cool merriment of the young fellow pleased Napoleon, who kept his eye on him, and afterwards admitted him to that faithful band of soldiers who formed his own select circle of officers, and who helped him to win some of his most brilliant military successes.

We cannot crowd into a few pages any adequate account of the career of this remarkable soldier and leader of men. Let us fix our attention for a few moments on some of the most striking incidents of his wonderful advance to a position which made him the ruler, not only of France, but of the best part of Europe itself.

Napoleon was a general and a fighter, but the whole of his life was not concerned with war. The Revolution had created in France an intolerable state of lawlessness, and as affairs in Paris began to quieten down, the leaders of the government undertook the difficult task of making new and simpler laws for the country. This good work was, however, interrupted by quarrels amongst themselves, and was only seriously resumed when Napoleon became First Consul. Under his guidance the task was carried through. "Every really good law," he said, "must have good sense for its foundation." The idea was new to many of the

* Alluding to the practice of using sand to dry the ink. This was, of course, before the invention of blotting-paper. The writer has seen a butcher use the sawdust from the floor of his shop.



ROUGET DE L'ISLE SINGING THE MARSEILLAISE.

(From the painting by Pils, in the Louvre Gallery. Photo by Mansell.)

In his "*French Revolution*" Carlyle tells how a band of men was sent out from Marseilles by the Municipality with the simple command, "March, strike down the Tyrant."

"Dusty of face, with frugal refreshment," writes Carlyle, "they plod onwards; unweariable, not to be turned aside. Such march will become famous. The Thought which works voiceless in this black-browed mass, an inspired Colonel, Rouget de l'Isle, has translated into grim melody and rhythm; into his Hymn or March of the Marseillaise: luckiest musical-composition ever promulgated. The sound of which will make the blood tingle in men's veins; and whole Armies and Assemblages will sing it, with eyes weeping and burning, with hearts defiant of Death, Despot, and Devil."

lawyers of the time, who were not used to regarding law as a matter of common sense. But Napoleon, the First Consul, had his way, and the system of laws named after him, the *Code Napoléon*, serves to give him a place among great rulers of history. "I shall go down to posterity," he said, "with this Code in my hand." Posterity, however, has almost forgotten this peaceful achievement of the great conqueror, which was overshadowed by his brilliant victories and his final overwhelming fall.

In the year 1800 Napoleon determined to lead an army into Italy by way of one of the Alpine passes known as that of the Great St. Bernard. He was warned that the undertaking would be difficult, but, as we might expect, this did not deter him in the least. His object was to rush down unexpectedly from the Alps, and cut off the retreat of an Austrian army then in Northern Italy ; and the very difficulty of the undertaking only acted as an incentive to such a man.

Here is the description of the memorable march across the snowy Alps, written by Napoleon's secretary :—

"At St. Pierre all semblance of a road disappeared. Thenceforth an army, horse and foot, laden with all the munitions of a campaign, forty field-pieces included, were to be urged up and along airy ridges of rock and eternal snow, where the goatherd, the hunter of the chamois, and the outlaw-smuggler are alone accustomed to venture ; amidst precipices,

where to slip a foot is death ; beneath glaciers, from which the percussion of a musket-shot is often sufficient to hurl an avalanche ; across bottomless chasms caked over with frost or snowdrift.

“The guns were dismounted, grooved into the trunks of trees, and then dragged on by sheer strength of muscle—not less than a hundred soldiers being sometimes harnessed to a single cannon. The carriages and wheels, being taken to pieces, were slung on poles, and borne on men’s shoulders. The powder and shot, packed into boxes of fir-wood, formed the lading of all the mules that could be collected over a wide range of the Alpine country.

“These preparations had been made during the week that elapsed between Bonaparte’s arrival at Geneva and the commencement of the march. He himself travelled sometimes on a mule, but mostly on foot, cheering on the soldiers who had the burden of the great guns.

“The fatigue undergone is not to be described. The men in front durst not halt to breathe, because the least stoppage there might have thrown the column behind into confusion, on the brink of deadly precipices ; and those in the rear had to flounder, knee-deep, through snow and ice trampled into sludge by the feet and hoofs of the preceding divisions.

“Happily the march of Napoleon was not harassed, like that of Hannibal, by the assaults of living enemies. The mountaineers, on the contrary, flocked in to reap the liberal rewards which



he offered to all who were willing to lighten the drudgery of his troops.

“On the 16th of May Napoleon slept at the convent of St. Maurice ; and in the course of the four following days the whole army passed the Great St. Bernard. It was on the 20th that Bonaparte himself halted an hour at the convent of the Hospitallers, which stands on the summit of this mighty mountain.

“The good fathers of the monastery had been warned beforehand of the march, and they had furnished every soldier as he passed with a luncheon of bread and cheese and a glass of wine ; for which seasonable kindness they now received the warm acknowledgments of the chief.

“It was here that he took his leave of a peasant youth who had walked by him, as his guide, all the way from the convent of St. Maurice. Napoleon conversed freely with the young man, and was much interested with his simplicity. At parting, he asked the guide some particulars about his personal situation ; and having heard his reply, gave him money and a billet to the head of the monastery of St. Maurice. The peasant delivered it accordingly, and was surprised to find that, in consequence of a scrap of writing which he could not read, his worldly comforts were to be permanently increased.

“The only saying of the hero, however, which this peasant treasured in his memory was, ‘I have spoiled a hat among your mountains ; well, I shall find a new one on the other side.’ Thus spoke

Napoleon, wringing the rain from his covering as he approached the hospice of St. Bernard. The guide described, however, very strikingly, the effects of Bonaparte's appearance and voice when any obstacle checked the advance of his soldiery along that fearful wilderness which is called emphatically 'the Valley of Desolation.'

"A single look or word was commonly sufficient to set all in motion again. But if the way presented some new and apparently insuperable difficulty, the consul bade the drums beat and the trumpets sound as if for the charge, and this never failed.

"On the 16th the vanguard reached the beautiful vale of Aosta, and the other divisions descended rapidly on their footsteps. This part of the progress was not less difficult than the ascent before. The horses, mules, and guns were to be led down one slippery steep after another; and we may judge with what anxious care, since Napoleon himself was once contented to slide nearly a hundred yards together, *seated*."

This brilliant achievement was but the prelude to a brilliant victory over the Austrians, that of Marengo, which gave to France control of the north-western portion of Italy. Napoleon kept the cloak which he wore on that day. We shall hear of it again.

Not long afterwards the conqueror was made First Consul for life, and was given the privilege of naming his successor. When he had ruled France and the territories he had conquered for

about a year, many plots were discovered against his life. The exposure of these designs against him roused the whole of France to such strong support of Napoleon that the people, to show their loyalty to him, now proclaimed him “Emperor of the French.” He was crowned in Notre Dame, in the presence of the Pope; but the new emperor would not allow the pontiff to place the crown upon his head. The actual coronation was performed by himself, as a sign that he was the elect of the nation, and did not rule by hereditary right, like the monarchs of France before his time. In the spring of the following year he crossed the Alps, and was crowned with the iron crown of Lombardy, receiving the title of King of Italy. He was thus following in the steps of Charlemagne. We shall see as we go on with our story that he regarded himself as the true successor of that monarch, who claimed to be “lord of the world.”

Our English history books tell the story of Napoleon’s plan for the invasion of England; of the medal bearing the inscription, “Struck at London in 1804,” which was prepared in anticipation of the coming conquest; and of the manner in which the heroic Nelson spoilt the plans of the would-be invader, and at Trafalgar laid down his life in purchasing the safety of his beloved country. So ended the great scheme for “leaping the ditch.” The emperor now altered his plans for dealing with “perfidious Albion.” He would starve her into submission to his will by closing the ports of the Continent to her commerce.

Meanwhile he marched across Europe at the head of a great army, and met the Russians and Austrians at Austerlitz, where he gained one of the most brilliant of his many military triumphs. He was greatly outnumbered, and held an inferior position on the field ; but he made a feigned attack, drew the enemy into a trap, and soon had the combined army entirely in his power.

As the Russians in retreat were crossing the frozen ponds on the plain of battle, the French gunners cut them down without mercy. The emperor, who was standing on a hill overlooking the field, now ordered the gunners to depress their cannon so that the balls would strike the ice before and behind the huddled mass of the retreating force. Under a furious cannonade the ice gave way, and numbers of the Russians were at once engulfed in the cold waters.

This was not war but a massacre, yet the conqueror was greatly pleased with his work. "Soldiers," he said to his men when the murderous work was over, "I am proud of you. When you reach home again you need only say, 'I was at Austerlitz,' and you will be saluted as heroes." On the next day he wrote to his wife, the Empress Josephine :—

*"I have beaten the Russian and Austrian armies commanded by the two emperors. I am a little tired. . . . I go to sleep for two or three hours. The Russian army is not only beaten, but destroyed. I embrace you.
"Napoleon."*

After this Napoleon went on from victory to victory. His aim was to become a second Charlemagne, and the whole of Europe was to be his kingdom. We have not space to follow the series of events by which he made himself master of Holland, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Spain, nor to trace in detail the wonderful advance to a position which made him king of the kings of Europe. “Into a score of years,” writes Lord Rosebery, “he crowded his own dazzling career. In that brief space we see the lean, hungry conqueror swell into the sovereign, and then into the sovereign of sovereigns. But England, his island enemy, is on his nerves ; he sees her everywhere ; he strikes at her blindly and wildly.”

One of his “blind and wild” blows was to issue the Berlin Decree, which forbade all trade or intercourse with England on the part of the nations under his control. It is easy to see how foolish this measure really was ; for if the people of Europe were not to have commercial dealings with England, the great trader of the world, they stood to lose very heavily indeed. Such a decree was not really worth the paper on which it was written. How England pursued the conqueror, checkmated him, and finally pursued him to his doom, we shall learn in our next chapter.

XXXII.

THE CONQUERORS OF NAPOLEON.

OUR last chapter told of the wonderful rise of Napoleon to the dazzling position of king of kings. We have now to watch the no less wonderful decline and fall of the man whom Tennyson calls the "world-victor."

It was at the hands of the great English general who afterwards became Duke of Wellington that the military career of Napoleon received its first serious check. Our English history tells the story of the Peninsular War, and of the repeated defeats of Napoleon's great generals, which led to the withdrawal of the French troops from Spain. England, which had overmastered the conqueror on the sea, was now taking up the work on land, and was destined to take a prominent part in the final overthrow of the Emperor of the French. Years afterwards, when he was a captive in St. Helena, Napoleon himself dated his downfall from the great struggle in the Peninsula. "That disastrous war was my ruin," he said. "It divided my strength, opened a way for the English, and injured my reputation in Europe."

In spite, however, of his reverses in Spain, Napoleon was still the idol of the French people, who appear to have been convinced that he could

do no wrong. "He had the air at this time," said one of his friends, "of one walking in a halo of glory." And another said, "France gave herself to him, absorbed herself in him, and seemed at one time no longer to think, except through him."

The Tsar of Russia had refused to fall in with Napoleon's ideas in the matter of closing his ports to English shipping. The Emperor of the French therefore determined to lead a large army into his country and bring him to his senses. He got together a force of six hundred thousand men, marched across Europe, and advanced upon Moscow.

The Russians retreated before him, but as they went they burned their villages and their fields of grain. Napoleon was thus deprived of supplies for his men, and placed at a great disadvantage. When he had penetrated into the country for almost five hundred miles, the Russians made a stand at Borodino, but after a desperate fight they were completely defeated.

The conqueror now advanced on Moscow, and encountered no opposition. He entered the ancient capital, but it seemed to be a city of the dead. Before long he discovered that the place was on fire, and gave orders to his troops to stop the flames. But the conflagration was by this time unmanageable, and in five days the city was in ashes, and the invading army was left shelterless, with scant supplies of food, and the terrible Russian winter before them.

After a time of somewhat weak indecision, which proved that Napoleon was no longer the strong man he had proved himself in the earlier part of his career, orders were given to begin the retreat westward. Then followed the disastrous march through the desolate plains of Western Russia. Even before the snow began to fall hunger and exhaustion had claimed nearly half of the great French army. For two months the march continued, the last part of it through pitiless wintry weather.

The ragged, shivering, starving men threw away their weapons, which were now only an encumbrance. On they staggered, day after day, until their strength was spent and many of them fell to the ground. The falling snowflakes soon covered them, and the line of retreat was marked by thousands of little white hillocks, each marking the last resting-place of a French soldier who had given his life for glory and the emperor.

After the terrible experiences on the plains of Moscow the French army was, of course, no longer the formidable weapon that it had been. The nations of Europe saw their opportunity, and an army of a million men was raised to crush the tyrant. Napoleon hastily raised a force of young recruits, the "army of boys," and met the allies at Leipsic. There he was completely beaten, and the allied armies marched upon Paris. A brother of Louis the Sixteenth was placed upon the throne of France. Napoleon was forced to abdicate, and is said to have made an ineffectual attempt to poison



Wellington

himself. He was now exiled to the small island of Elba, off the Italian coast, of which he was allowed to call himself emperor.

Ten months later he managed to make his escape from Elba, and as soon as he reached France found the army ready to fight for him as of old. He made his way to Paris, to find that the French king had forsaken the capital in a fright on the previous day. Before long he had mustered a great army, and was prepared to face the European coalition which he knew well enough would soon be arrayed against him. A congress of statesmen was at the moment sitting in Vienna, engaged in the work of settling the disturbance in Europe which Napoleon had created. When the news from Paris reached them they published a proclamation in these words :—

“By breaking the Convention which established him in Elba, Bonaparte destroys the only legal title on which his existence depended.

“By appearing again in France, with projects of confusion and disorder, he has deprived himself of the protection of the law, and shown to the world that there can be neither peace nor truce with him.

“The Powers consequently declare that Napoleon Bonaparte has placed himself without the pale of civil and social relations, and that as an enemy and disturber of the peace of the world he has made himself liable to public vengeance.”

In their rearrangement of the map of Europe the members of the Congress at Vienna had made

Belgium into a kingdom, and had given to Prussia certain provinces on the Rhine. At the moment there was in Belgium an English army under the Duke of Wellington, prepared to establish the new king on his throne ; while in the Rhenish provinces there was a Prussian army under Blücher, the brave general whose pluck and dash had earned for him the name of " Marshal Forwards."

It was arranged that a Russian army should join forces with the English and the Prussians, and that the allies should immediately march upon Paris. Napoleon decided that he would not await this movement, but that he would lead his men at once into Belgium and destroy the forces of Wellington and Blücher in turn.

He accordingly crossed the Belgian frontier on the fourteenth of June in the year 1815. On the sixteenth he met the Prussians and defeated them. Then came the final struggle, the battle of Waterloo, which was fought on a great plain about twelve miles to the south-east of Brussels.

The fight took place on Sunday, June 18th. Wellington's plan was to hold the position which he occupied until Blücher should come to his aid. But the day wore on, and the Prussians did not come, while the French fire made terrible havoc among the brave British and Belgian soldiers under the Iron Duke. At last, towards evening, the Prussians came on the scene, and the fight increased in fury, while the French began to fall back.

Napoleon, as a last resort, ordered the veterans

who formed his "Imperial Guard" to charge the enemy. They advanced with all the confidence born of victory after victory, but were forced to fall back under a murderous fire from the British and Prussian batteries. Then a remnant of the "Old Guard" took up a position on a slight eminence and dared their foes to dislodge them. They were summoned to surrender, but replied, "The Guard dies but does not yield;" and before long they were mown down by the victors, while the rest of the army of Napoleon was in full retreat.

The great battle has been often described, both by poets and by prose writers. Byron has written of the eve of the struggle in the famous lines known to every schoolboy, which begin:—

" There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her beauty and her chivalry; and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men."

Tennyson makes reference to Waterloo itself in his "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington:—"

" Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheeled on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dashed on every rocky square,
Their surging charges foamed themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Through the long-tormented air
Heaven flashed a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!"

Victor Hugo describes the battle in his stirring story "Les Misérables," and another account takes a prominent place in the latter part of Thackeray's novel "Vanity Fair."

After the fight Napoleon escaped from the field, and made his way to Paris. There he drew up an act of abdication, in which he declared, "My public life is finished. I proclaim my son Emperor of the French, under the title of Napoleon the Second." Then he gave himself up to his old enemies the British at Rochefort, where the warship *Bellerophon* was moored. From here he wrote a letter to the Prince Regent, in which he said :—

"A victim to the factions which distract my country, and to the enmity of the greatest powers of Europe, I have terminated my political career, and I come to throw myself upon the hospitality of the British people. I put myself under the protection of their laws ; which I claim from your Royal Highness, as the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies."

Napoleon did indeed partake of the hospitality of the British people for the rest of his life ; but it was on the lonely island of St. Helena, far out in mid-Atlantic, and under strict guard, that he lived as the guest of the nation which had thwarted his plans so often, and had at length been the chief means of his downfall. He died six years after the great fight of Waterloo. "On the night of his death," writes Lord Rosebery, "a great storm was raging outside, which shook the frail huts of the

soldiers as with an earthquake, tore up the trees which the emperor had planted, and uprooted the willow under which he had been accustomed to repose. Within, the faithful Marchand was covering the body with the cloak which the young conqueror had worn at Marengo."

XXXIII.

PRINCE BISMARCK, THE MAN OF BLOOD AND IRON.

BISMARCK, the German statesman, once said to a friend, "Great questions are not to be solved by speeches and parliamentary votes, but by blood and iron." He made many enemies, even in his own country, by expressing such opinions as this. But for the criticism of other people he had little regard; and when we look back upon the stirring events of his public life, we find how great a part of it was occupied by war and conquest. Yet he worked steadily and consistently for the preservation of the peace of Europe, and for the unity and prosperity of the German Fatherland.

Bismarck was a native of Prussian Saxony, and a member of a noble family which had served the king in some of the highest offices of the state, his grandfather having been privy councillor to Frederick the Great. The first part of his manhood was devoted to the care of his paternal estate. He loved the life of the country, and had an unreasoning hatred of cities. "I hope," he said on one occasion, "to see them all levelled to the ground."

At the age of thirty-two he became a member of the Prussian Diet, and soon made his mark as a

careful and far-seeing statesman. He was sent as ambassador to Austria, Russia, and France in succession, and at the age of forty-seven he became Minister of Foreign Affairs. He now applied himself to the work of his life—namely, the unification of Germany, which was made up of a large number of kingdoms, principalities, and dukedoms, each under its own ruler. His plan was to sever the connection of Northern Germany with Austria, and to create a new Germany, to be made up of a federation of states, with Prussia as the predominant partner. He saw quite clearly that Germany could never become a great world power while it lacked the unity always so necessary for national strength and advancement.

The first step to be taken was to cut off Austria from the other German states, for it was Bismarck's plan to set up the new Germany without including her at all. So Prussia embarked in a struggle with Austria, and at Sadowa, in Bohemia, won a decisive victory. The Prussian king, Frederick William the Fourth, Moltke, the famous strategist, and Bismarck were all present at this battle. At first the day went badly for the Prussians, and before long Moltke was anxiously scanning the plain to the north of the battlefield for the reinforcements under the Crown Prince Frederick, which were unaccountably delayed.

The king and Bismarck were at his side, and shared in his anxiety. Suddenly Bismarck drew attention to some faint lines in the far distance. "They are but furrows in a ploughed field," said



A Meeting of Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel in the Early Morning.
(From the painting by H. C. Ademollo. Brogi photo.)

an officer. "No," said the minister, "they are not furrows—the spaces between the lines are not equal; they are advancing battalions." His words proved to be true, and before long the Crown Prince was taking a leading part in the fight, and contributed greatly to the success which crowned the day. This was the prince who married the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria of England.

His father also took an active part in the fight at Sadowa—too active, indeed, for Bismarck's peace of mind. "Sire," said the latter, "as a mere major in the army I have no right to give your Majesty any advice on the field of battle; but as minister and president it is my duty to entreat you not to expose yourself to any danger." "Very well, Bismarck," said the king; "let us ride forward," and he started his horse into a gentle canter. This was not quite enough to allay the minister's anxiety, so he fell back for a moment and gave the king's charger a sly kick, which quickened its pace, and soon the monarch was out of the zone of fire. This battle practically ended the war.

Austria was now to be entirely separated from Germany, and to form, with the kingdom of Hungary, what came to be known as the "Dual Monarchy." This great change had been brought about by Bismarck in the teeth of the fiercest opposition. When the war began, he was refused supplies by the Prussian Parliament; but as soon as his plans proved successful, the same body passed an Act, forgiving him for his "crimes."

Bismarck now turned his attention to France,

which had been the rival of Prussia for generations, and which was now under the rule of Napoleon the Third, a nephew of Bonaparte. The German statesman had a profound distrust of the French emperor, and long before a quarrel broke out between Prussia and France he proved to his people that Napoleon had definite designs upon that portion of German territory known as the Duchy of Luxembourg, which lies to the north-east of France.

In the year 1870 there was a dispute between Prussia and France over the succession to the throne of Spain. The merits of the quarrel need not concern us. The final result was a declaration of war by Napoleon in July, and before long he was marching eastward at the head of a poorly equipped army, which had left Paris cheered by the mad cries of the populace of "On to Berlin."

Prussia sprang to arms. For a long time the organization and equipment of her forces had been in the hands of the famous general Moltke, and the news of war gave him his opportunity of showing how well prepared was the Prussian army. The common peril rallied most of the German princes to the standard of Prussia, and without waiting for the invasion of Germany, Moltke and his colleagues crossed the French frontier, to the great consternation of Paris, where the Emperor Napoleon was now the most unpopular man in the country. Had he appeared in the streets of his capital at this time, his life would undoubtedly have been forfeited.

Meanwhile fierce fighting was going on near the north-eastern frontier of France. The Germans shut up the best part of the French army in Metz, and the emperor ordered Marshal MacMahon to march to the relief of the city. The latter was, however, unequal to the task, and falling back upon Sedan, was faced by a German army. There a great battle was fought, in which the French suffered overwhelming defeat.

When the white flag had been run up by the French as a token of defeat, a Prussian officer was sent into Sedan to demand the surrender of the town. To his surprise he was ushered into the presence of Napoleon himself, who received him with courtesy; and then, sitting down, wrote a brief note, which he handed to the messenger with a courtly bow, begging him to convey it to his king.

The officer rode back through the lines to the place where the king was waiting with the Crown Prince, Bismarck, and Moltke. Uncovering his head, he advanced to his royal master and handed him the emperor's letter. With some agitation King William broke the great scarlet seal and read:—

“MY BROTHER,—Not having been permitted to die at the head of my troops, nothing remains for me but to give up the sword to your Majesty.—
Your good brother, NAPOLEON.”

This was Napoleon's last official letter. He became the prisoner of the victorious Germans,



PRINCE BISMARCK.

and three days later was formally deposed by the representatives of the French people in Paris, who declared France a republic.

Before long Metz had also fallen, and the Germans had invested Paris. For nearly five months of severe winter weather the siege continued, and food became so scarce that the people were forced to eat horses, dogs, cats, and even the animals in the Zoological Gardens. They also suffered terrible distress from the cold, and many of them lived in their cellars to keep themselves warm, as well as to escape the Prussian shells. In order to provide fuel they cut down the beautiful trees in the parks and public avenues, and the city upon which Napoleon had spent huge sums of money soon wore an aspect of mourning.

Meanwhile the Prussian king and his staff had taken up their quarters in the magnificent palace of Versailles, which, as we have seen, had been built by King Louis the Fourteenth at ruinous expense. And here, while the siege of Paris was going on, a step was taken which crowned the work of Bismarck's life. In the great Hall of Mirrors King Frederick William of Prussia was formally declared German Emperor, with the full consent of the princes of the other states of Germany.

It was a great day in the history of Germany, and indeed of the history of modern Europe, and the actual ceremony of proclamation merits some detailed description. The king's carriage drove into the great courtyard a little before noon, and

as his Majesty entered the hall he was greeted by a choral song chanted by a choir of soldiers. He wore the uniform of a general, with a plumed helmet; and as he took up his position on a dais, behind which the colours were hung, it was evident to all that he was under the influence of deep emotion.

He was surrounded by a brilliant company of German princes, including his own handsome son in the uniform of a field marshal, while Moltke and Bismarck, who had made this historic ceremony possible, stood not far away. Six chaplains now conducted a religious service, after which a psalm was chanted by the whole assembly.

This done, the aged monarch read a declaration formally announcing the establishment of a German empire, and the desire of the confederate princes that he should assume the imperial title. Bismarck now stepped forward, and in a somewhat trembling voice read the address of the new emperor to the German people, in which the monarch declared that he intended to rule, not in the manner of the heads of the Holy Roman Empire, "who, during the Middle Ages, wasted the strength of Germany in vain attempts to extend their dominion over other nations, but with the sincere desire to build up an empire of peace and prosperity in which the people of Germany may find and enjoy what they have for centuries desired."

As soon as the minister had concluded, the Grand Duke of Baden stepped forward, and waving his shining helmet above his head, cried out, "Long

live his Imperial Majesty the Emperor William!" The whole assembly took up the cry, and the Hall of Mirrors re-echoed with their ringing "Hoch! hoch! hoch!" When the cheers had subsided, princes and statesmen gathered round the weeping emperor to do him homage, the crown prince being the first to kiss his father's hand. Meanwhile in the distance the siege guns round Paris seemed to fire a military salute in honour of the memorable historic event, which has no parallel in the pages of history, nor even of historic fiction.

About a fortnight later Paris surrendered to the Germans, and a treaty of peace was signed. Germany was to obtain all German-speaking Lorraine, the fortress of Metz, the whole of Alsace, and a war indemnity of two hundred million pounds. The money was paid within the allotted time, while some fifty thousand of the people of Alsace forfeited their homes and farms to pass over into France in preference to renouncing their country and their flag.

The great work to which Bismarck had dedicated his life was now accomplished. He continued, however, to direct the affairs of the Fatherland, not only during the remainder of the reign of the Emperor William the First, but during the very short reign of his son Frederick, who came to the throne smitten by a mortal disease. When William the Second succeeded, it soon became evident that the young emperor and the old chancellor could not work together, and the latter retired from public life. He lived for eight years longer,

dying in the year 1898, nearly thirty years after the creation of the new European state, which had meantime become one of the most important commercial countries in the world.

Unfortunately for Germany and for the world at large, William the Second was not content with the laurels of peace. He largely increased the army, constructed a powerful navy, and, while professing to be a lover of peace, prepared diligently for war. The whole of Germany became imbued with the spirit of Prussia, a kingdom which from history and training regarded conquest as the royal road to prosperity. The power of the military class in Germany, the inordinate ambition of the emperor, and the desire for territorial expansion culminated in the Great War of 1914—a war unparalleled in history. Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey were opposed by Britain, France, Russia, America, Japan, and other countries. Instead of thousands, millions of men were engaged, and battles lasted not days but months. The fighting was not at this place or that, but extended over hundreds of miles, and more lives were lost than in all the wars of the last hundred years. By the end of 1918 the resources of Germany were exhausted, the emperor abdicated, and we may hope that the world has now entered on a long era of peace.

XXXIV.

GARIBALDI, THE HERO OF THE RED SHIRT.

IN the year 1810 a boy was born in the town of Nice who bore the name of Guiseppe Garibaldi. He was the son of a seaman, and was, like Luther, "born poor and brought up poor." Yet he lived to be the associate of kings and statesmen, and to help greatly in the establishment of the modern kingdom of Italy.

Like many other great men, Garibaldi had an excellent mother, who did not allow her boy to forget that although he was poor he was descended from an ancient family in Lombardy, and that his love and service as a patriot were due to Italy. This lesson sank deeply into his mind, and he grew up with a burning desire in his heart to see Italy freed from Austria and united under one monarch.

As soon as he was old enough his father took him on several short voyages, and he had the opportunity of seeing both Rome and Constantinople. Then the youth became acquainted with a man named Mazzini, who worked, planned, and plotted for the downfall of Austria in Italy; for at that time Austria was all-powerful in the peninsula. She held the states of Lombardy and Venetia

in the north. The Papal States, which were ruled by the Pope as a temporal prince, were under her influence. The kingdom of Naples was also held in check by her. The only free and independent portion of the peninsula was the little kingdom of Sardinia, whose monarch, Victor Emmanuel, became the chief hope of the revolutionists.

Mazzini's aim at first was to set up a republic, and he took part in the risings with that object. These were sternly repressed by the ruling authorities, and both Mazzini and Garibaldi had to seek safety in flight. The former found his way to Marseilles, and went on with his work of keeping steadfastly before the people who belonged to the "Young Italy" party the idea of a united and free country.

Garibaldi did not accompany Mazzini to Marseilles, but took ship and sailed to Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, where he spent the next twelve years of his life. He did not, however, settle down to a commercial life. He became a revolutionist, as he had been at home, for the love of adventure and political freedom was strong within him. One of the states of Brazil happened to be in conflict with the emperor, and Garibaldi became commander of a privateer, with which he soon captured a much larger vessel.

He took an active part in this civil war, and in this way unconsciously prepared himself for the greater work which was awaiting him in Europe. He learnt to lead, to assert himself, and to make the most of small advantages. His men loved him

devotedly, for he never asked them to go where he was not ready to lead. After an absence of twelve years he decided to return to Italy. He had married a noble-minded woman, who made him a true helpmeet, and who was ready to share his adventurous life like a true comrade. In the year 1848 he landed at Nice, ready to take a share in the great movements then in progress in Italy.

The revolutionists had succeeded in dethroning the Pope and making Rome a republic. But the Pope applied for help to France, and troops were sent to Rome at once. There was a three months' siege, and then a fierce battle, in which the Italian patriots suffered defeat. The Pope was restored, and Garibaldi, with his followers, became a fugitive, hunted by the Austrians from place to place. His brave wife accompanied him, and bore without complaining the great hardships endured by the little party until she could go on no longer, and died in the arms of her husband while they were passing through a wood. After a while, Garibaldi, the "knight-errant," as one writer calls him, was able to reach Tunis, where some admirers supplied him with money which enabled him to make his way to New York, and here he engaged in business, and enjoyed considerable success. But his heart was not in buying and selling. The unity and freedom of Italy were always before his mind, and in 1855 he set out for home once more, not, as before, in poverty, but with means sufficient for his own wants and for helping the cause of the Italian patriots in the most practical manner.



He was ready with his money and with his services as a leader. No man of his time had such power over the hearts of men. He had "the simplicity of a child, intense love for all true patriots, complete forgetfulness of self, indifference to money and personal rewards, courage of the highest kind, a noble aim, and a disposition to hope for the best." Further, he appealed to those who followed him by his very outward appearance, which was picturesque in the extreme. His favourite garb consisted of gray trousers, red shirt, wide-awake hat, and the poncho or South American blanket, which had an opening in the middle for the head, and hung loosely down before and behind, affording complete freedom for the arms.

When he reached Italy he built a small house, which he named "The Hermitage," on the small island of Caprera, off the coast of Sardinia. Here he waited and watched for his opportunity. After four years war broke out with Austria, and King Victor Emmanuel made him a lieutenant-general, giving him command of a force of regulars, which harassed the Austrian troops in a most exasperating manner by carrying on a kind of Indian warfare, such as their leader had learnt in South America. When this campaign was over Garibaldi went to Genoa, where he spent some months in making preparations for the crowning work of his life. This was an expedition to Sicily, which led, within the short space of six months, to the fall of the kingdom of Naples, of which Sicily formed a part,

and the union of North and South Italy under Victor Emmanuel as king.

As soon as his plans were made he set sail from Genoa, and landed in Sicily, and was soon master of the whole of the island except one fortress. Then he crossed to the mainland. The Neapolitan troops fled before him in terror, and without any serious fighting he took possession of the city, and was named Dictator of the kingdom. But when Victor Emmanuel marched southward he gave up the southern kingdom to him and hailed him as King of Italy, though there was to be a good deal of fighting before the monarch could rightly claim that title.

After this campaign the king wished to reward the brave "knight-errant," and offered him both titles and treasure. But Garibaldi cared for none of these things, and went back quietly to his farm in Caprera. Meanwhile Victor Emmanuel went on with his work, and before long took Venetia from Austria. His capital was now the city of Florence ; but the Italian patriots ardently longed to make Rome the chief city of their new kingdom. The Pope, however, was strongly supported by Napoleon the Third of France, who was determined that the head of the Roman Catholic Church should retain as a temporal prince the central portion of Italy known as the Papal States.

We have wandered a long way from the arrangement under which a German king and the Roman pontiff were to rule the world together.

In 1870 the Franco-Prussian war began, and

early in the struggle, as we have seen, Napoleon was disowned by his people. The French troops sent to Rome to defend the Pope against the soldiers of Garibaldi were withdrawn to fight for their own capital, and the troops of the Italian Liberator entered the Eternal City in the same year that a German king was proclaimed at Versailles as Emperor of the new Germany. Two years later the King of Italy took up his residence in Rome, and the Pope withdrew to the palace known as the Vatican, the grounds of which he never leaves. A new Parliament was elected for Italy on the model of our own. This was the work of Count Cavour, the wise and far-seeing statesman who did for Italy what Bismarck did for Germany, and who had made a special study of the constitution and methods of the British House of Commons from the Strangers' Gallery. Garibaldi was elected a member of the new Italian assembly, and titles and honours were again offered to him, but he declined them all. He had long been a semi-invalid, and as his health was now permanently failing, he retired to his home at Caprera, where he died some twelve years after his entry into Rome.

We end these stories where we began—in the Eternal City. We have travelled into many lands, and read of many men with many aims. But through the whole of these chapters the idea of world-lordship has never been really absent. Cæsar, Charlemagne, Charles the Fifth, Louis the Fourteenth, Napoleon Bonaparte, each in turn planned to rule the whole of Europe, and each,

in part at least, realized his ambition. But the great lesson of the history of Europe is that one man can never rule in peace so many varying nations, but that each people united in language, ideas, and aims ought to have a ruler of its own, and to "seek peace and ensue it" within its own borders.

THE END.

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